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THE

TOWN OF THE CASCADES.

VOLUME I.

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THE

TOWN OF THE CASCADES.

BY

MICHAEL BANIM,

SURVIVOR OF THE "O'HARA FAMILY,"

AUTHOR OF "CROHOORE OF THE BILHOOK," AND SEVERAL OTHERS OF THE "O'HARA TALES."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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Dedication.

TO

HIS EXCELLENCY THE EARL OF CARLISLE,

Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

My Lord,

In acknowledgment of your kindness to my late brother, to his child, and to his widow, and in testimony of my personal gratitude for the services rendered to myself,—it is a gratification to me to avail myself of this opportunity of avowing my obligations by dedicating these volumes to you.

With the hope that the offering may not be unworthy of one, even less distinguished by his high station than by his literary rank, and his benevolence of nature,

I have the honor, my Lord,
To subscribe myself,
Your Lordship's obliged Servant,
MICHAEL BANIM.

Kilkenny, November 25, 1863.

PREFACE.

It appears to me that, in a greater degree perhaps than might be necessary with other books, this Tale requires a few words of preface.

So far back as the year 1825—now, alas! forty years ago,—I made my first essay as a story-teller, in conjunction with my beloved brother, the late John Banim.

He had, before that date, taken up the profession —if such it may be called—of a literary man. He had laid by the painter's pallet, which he had in the first instance adopted as his escutcheon, and had mounted the insignia of his future vocation,—the pen. By the pen he was thenceforth to gain his subsistence.

He communicated to me his intention of writing some tales descriptive of Irish life and manners: truthful delineations he intended they should be. I urged him to do so, and reminded him of certain occurrences related to us when we were boys.

"I cannot take up your ideas," my brother said; "you must sit down and commit them to paper yourself."

After much persuasion, I complied with his request, and, devoting my spare time to the task assigned me, the result was the tale, the authorship of which is avowed on the title-page to these volumes.

Thenceforward my brother and I co-operated as joint producers of the tales appearing from time to time under the title of "Tales by the O'Hara Family," my brother residing in London, while I remained where I still live, in, as it is called, "the faire citie" of Kilkenny.

My brother's *nom de plume* was Barnes O'Hara;

mine, Abel O'Hara. And thus it was that we carried on our partnership :—

We wrought simultaneously, each at his own conception. The productions of Barnes O'Hara were transmitted to Abel, and those of Abel to Barnes; and our understanding was, that each was at liberty to trim and prune, and, if need were, to alter the manuscript of the other.

We never had a disagreement, as to any liberties taken the one with the other: the suggestions of Abel to Barnes, or of Barnes to Abel, were implicitly adopted by both without a question. Thus we continued to go on together, until my brother, in consequence of the excessive application of his mind, was disabled by the malady which, after many years of suffering, terminated his life, while yet in the prime of manhood as to years.

For some time subsequent to his death, I felt a dislike to follow singly the occupation he and I had pursued together; at length I published a tale named "Clough Fionn," in the Dublin University

Magazine; "The Town of the Cascades," I now offer as the second single-handed production of "The Survivor of the O'Hara family."

I have never been, as my brother was, a literary man by profession. I have always had an occupation, distinct from that of authorship: and almost all through, my devotion to my pen has been desultory.

It is not necessary I should here particularize the Tales contributed by me to the O'Hara series, as Abel O'Hara; I will merely state, that they were not a few.

Why do I give, in the shape of a preface, this short biographical sketch?

Plainly, because I would insinuate thereby, that I am not altogether a stranger, making my first appearance on the literary stage. I venture to claim recognition as an acquaintance of some standing.

I know full well, that no degree of intimacy will or ought to influence the reading public, if the fare offered be unpalatable or unfit to be served up.

With this conviction on my mind, and abiding judgment,—fair, honest judgment I know I shall receive from the tribunal before which I appear,—I offer "The Town of the Cascades" as a single-handed production of the formerly Abel O'Hara, now—

The Reader's very humble servant,

MICHAEL BANIM.

Kilkenny, 25th November, 1863.

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THE

TOWN OF THE CASCADES.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE BORNOCH BATHING-PLACE.

THE extent of my experience as a traveller is limited enough. My absences from the spot to which I have been affixed since I was born, have been few and far between. In my aberrations I have never required a clue to enable me to retrace my steps. Foreign countries I cannot speak of from personal observation, and even through my own "Green Isle," my wanderings have not been wide, nor farther from the centre round which I revolve than such a distance as a two days' journey would accomplish.

Yet, if one diverge ever so little from the limit of his own domestic tether, something will present itself not before noticed,—some local distinction, unique, mayhap, in character,—some difference of habit, or manner, or mode of expression, distinguishing the "natives" of new ground. So that if one's gusto for novelty be simple, such as is relished by the palate unaccustomed to highly-spiced dishes, food to gratify it may be found almost anywhere.

Whenever I can command even a short relaxation from the every-day labour of my domiciliary mill, I like to go about "poking my nose" here and there and everywhere, and I like to examine leisurely and closely anything that is even partially new to me.

During the autumn, some years ago,—no matter how many,—I had a fortnight's holiday. This, to me, long period of leisure, I spent at an out-of-the-way bathing-place on the coast of Clare. And there, in one of my "poking" deviations from head-quarters, I picked up the materials for the narrative I am about to relate.

I call what is to follow a narrative, not a tale. It

will not be a tale, properly so called. You will see, if you have the patience to read it, that there is no hero or heroine, strictly speaking;—that it wants what every one knows to be the main-spring of a tale, and what sets all the wheels busily turning,—namely, an intricate and embarrassing love affair. You will see that I have no romantic adventures to recite;—in fact that there are none of the statutable requisites to enable the production to rank as a tale. This then is to be simply a narrative.

At my out-of-the-way Clare-coast bathing place, the visitors who come there are called by the permanent residents "*Forneyaghs*" which Irish word means "*sea-divers.*" And the natives are known by another local appellation—they are "*Bornochs.*" The Forneyaghs are regarded as birds of passage who frequent the Bornoch-bay periodically only, their main occupation while there being to submerge themselves three or four times daily under the waves that roll in from the Atlantic for their use. This they continue to do while the fine weather lasts, but as winter approaches they take flight with

the swallows to another land. The "Bornochs" or natives are, on the contrary, fixed to the spot, and must there remain during all seasons and in all weathers. "Bornoch" is the Irish name for limpit, which species of mollusca abound along the coast, remaining fastened to the rocks all the year round.

So, to use the language of the locality, I was a "Forneyagh" at this unfashionable place of resort during the period of autumn, some years since.

A description of the "Bornochs" or Bornoch village, as I shall call it, not being necessary to my purpose, I will not enter on it. It will be sufficient here to say, that the village of the Bornochs stands above a nearly circular bay opening into the wide Atlantic, which rolls along in majesty; and that the waves, which abroad rise mountain high, are here broken against a strand, smooth and level beneath the feet of the "Forneyaghs" who disport in the waters. I may add, what I found in my own instance to be true, that the air about is salubrious and health-giving to the sea-divers.

Two miles inland from the Bornoch village is what I believe I must call a town. Of much more importance it is than the humble bathing-place. It is too pretentious to be classed as a village, and yet hardly of sufficient extent to deserve the appellation of "town." Still, to avoid giving offence I will so name it. There may be, houses and huts as they stand, three hundred dwellings within the precincts of this town. It is admitted by census-takers that Irish houses contain as many inmates, to speak moderately, as the houses of any other country.—And it is a peculiarity which, I believe, has puzzled political economists, that the smaller the houses the more close their resemblance to beehives (as regards population). The three hundred houses forming the town of which I now speak, contained, I should say, two thousand "souls" big and little, young and old.

There is a main street in this town to the extent of eighty or one hundred houses on either side. A church terminates the view down the main street. It is plain to see that many well-to-do people are

located here, witness the good, carefully-kept dwellings, and the display of shop-wares—neither scanty nor unattractive. It is not difficult as you pass along to discover the magnates of the place in the busy, thriving owners of extensive establishments, or to separate from these the struggling, hard-pressed traders. You can easily understand what the pompous carriage of the first, and the unpretentious bearing of the others signifies. And still easier is it to recognize those who have nothing at all to boast of in a worldly way. You will find the great, the less, and the least, with a locally established scale for measurement, wherever there is a congregation of human beings.

There are many dingy cabins in the neighbourhood of the main street, and the place has also its "genteel" residences,—small houses where "genteel" people live. In the outskirts there is a good Roman Catholic place of worship, and a plain but extensive building on a height particularly attracted my notice. I learned it was a convent school. But as I do not intend to become the typo-

graphist of this "town," I will not enter further into particulars, except where they will answer my purpose.

The walk from the village of the Bornochs to this more important town of ——, is through a country of singularly uneven surface, of which more hereafter. You enter by a road running parallel with a river which flows at your left hand, its banks, as you near the town, being clothed with fine old trees. From this road you pass over the bridge spanning the river. If you pause on this bridge, and you can hardly avoid doing so (you will be curious to learn why the water is so noisy in its passage), you will see, immediately below you a succession of cascades, —the whole breadth of the water falling from one rocky ledge to another in pellucid sheets, foaming and tossing, and falling over another, and another, and another ledge;—then rushing rapidly onward, and finally, flowing calmly and smoothly, as if fatigued by so many somersaults, until it is lost to view in its curves round wooded heights that rise

above it on either side. You will see woods mounting above the river to your right and left; and you will see, overtopping the woods, the mansion of the owner of the district, all forming an attractive but not extensive prospect.

Crossing to the opposite parapet of the bridge, the river is seen in its approach to the cataracts. It is curling in dimpled eddies round small, shrubby islands,—smiling pleasantly after its escapades farther up, where it had had to bound headlong over other rocky impediments to its progress. These far-up falls you cannot see from where you stand, but I will bring them under your notice shortly from another point of observation.

Before quitting our present position, however, I will direct your attention to two points. Looking up the river, you will see that the banks, right and left, rise pretty high above it, and that there are houses built along those elevated banks. Those to the left you need not particularly notice, but those topping the right bank—those with the broken and

uneven footway leading to them—demand some attention. Look at them, and you will understand that they must have been originally intended as residences for "genteel people." You will probably agree with me, that the locality was not well chosen for the class of tenants called in the town of —— "genteel;" for immediately below you will see bare-footed women, midleg in the water, thumping articles of household wear with wooden instruments, —"beetling clothes" is the term affixed to the occupation. And you will see, near the sturdy *blanchisseuses*, horses, with ostlers bestriding them, drinking the water. "Genteel" people would not readily subject themselves to such annoyances. And I conclude that these houses to the right were what is called a bad speculation.

Whether my judgment be right or wrong in this matter, it is evident that the houses have of late been neglected. They are two stories high, and they have windows at each side of their hall-doors. It is evident, however, that a paint-brush has not been applied to these doors for a very long time; and

they are all knockerless, though, it is to be presumed, originally possessed of such appendages. Many of the windows, too, are broken and patched with paper, whilst window-shutters hang by one hinge, or have been used as temporary barriers against the entrance of too much wind and rain. The water-spouts hang in broken scraps here and there, while the unprotected house-fronts are dingy and discoloured—"*seedy*" houses I will call them, adopting the term applied to persons whose outward garb is threadbare and out-of-elbows.

Having duly remarked these half-dozen "seedy" or "shabby-genteel" little houses, I will ask you to carry your eye to the left bank of the river. You will see there a cluster of inferior dwellings, with one or two of more consideration rising above them. But the principal object to which I point is a ruinous building topping a hill of considerable elevation, this hill covered with trees from base to summit. So, at least, it appears to us.

I have directed attention to the small, neglected houses to the right of the river, and to the ruin

topping the wooded hill on the left, as to these I shall have to refer hereafter. As a further prelude to the events I have to relate, I will take a view of a residence contiguous to the town, wherein the principal personages of my narrative dwelt.

Passing from the bridge, and going a short distance along the main street, and then turning short down by the post-office, which is in a hollow (a "genteel" little house by-the-way), a broad and well-kept carriage-road is gained, running parallel with the river, and overhung with lofty trees. This road leads to the mansion-house I have pointed out from the bridge as elevated above the wooded heights that overlook the cascades. Before reaching the entrance gates to the grounds of this mansion, a view is obtained, by looking over a low wall to the right, of a pretty cottage structure. It is a low building, but of some extent. The casement windows are nearly hidden by the evergreens that cover the entire front, but you can see their white muslin draperies fluttering in the breeze. Through the green covering of the cottage, abundance of

roses of every hue and of roseate fragrance, glisten whenever roses bloom. A rustic porch supporting graceful creeping plants shades the entrance door, and this is flanked on either side by a goodly show of exotics in flower-pot stands. Adjoining the road is a garden well stocked with fruit trees and choice vegetables, and beyond this, nearer to the cottage, and separated by a carefully clipped hedge, is ample space for the exclusive cultivation of flowers. To the right of the cottage, and separated from the gardens by another trim hedge is a smooth field of emerald green studded with trees, whose shadows, when the sun shines, chequer the surface. In the fruit and vegetable garden there is a leafy bower, and in the emerald green field another. From the first bower a person sitting on its rustic bench can see the river cascades, and the verdant slopes beyond, and the woody summits; and the view of the falling waters, and the voice of the falling waters, and the green hill-sides, and the varying foliage, produce a pleasant and dreamy effect on the mind. From the second bower in the emerald field

the cottage only, and its gardens, and the trees beyond, are visible. But the dash of the river as it descends is heard; somewhat clamorous, but soothing and musical, as the sound of falling waters always is.

CHAPTER II.

"THE TOWN OF THE CASCADES." THE HILL-TOP CHURCHYARD.

I SHALL call the little town I have partially described by a name of my own bestowing, "The Town of the Cascades." And by this name it will in future be recognized.

During my fortnight's sojourn as a "Forneyagh," in the sea-coast village of the Bornochs, I paid frequent visits to the "Town of the Cascades," for the purpose of "poking my nose" in every direction. I have pointed out an abrupt, wooded hill, seen from the bridge when looking up the river, this hill bearing on its summit a ruinous building. One of my poking expeditions was to this ruin.

My way thither was through a very wretched out-

let, where half the grimy cabins were partially tumbled down, and the people dwelling in the few that remained, to all appearance the poorest of the poor. I was obliged to bend my back most inconveniently while scaling this dilapidated street of hovels. On the apex of the ascent was the ruin I had seen from below. I found that it stood in the centre of an enclosed space, and in the enclosing wall were projecting steps that enabled me to mount up and enter an elevated burial-ground, in the centre of which was the ruin I had almost strained my spine to reach.

Like many an object of desire I have scrambled after during my life, I found, now I had gained my goal, that in the roofless building I examined there was nothing to repay me for the trouble I had taken. When looking upwards from the bridge, I had taken it for granted that I was to find some interesting relic of former days. I found no such thing. I could learn that a rude, primitive place of worship had occupied the same space at some unrecorded date. But I now stood by a comparatively

modern structure, four roofless walls, without antiquity, or architectural decoration, or legend appertaining, to give them value. A roofless barn would have been as interesting an object for scrutiny.

The history of the hill-top ruin is this. It had been erected on the site of an ancient crypt forty years previous to my visit, and was used as a church, The devotion of its frequenters was not, however, sufficiently ardent to neutralize the fatigue encountered while mounting up, or to reconcile them to the squalor witnessed during the weekly pilgrimage. So the edifice was abandoned, and a new church built of easy access, requiring no more than a modicum of pious zeal to reach it, and in the approach to which there need be no brushing of skirts with anti-christian poverty. The new church I have noticed before, as terminating the view down the main street of my "Town of the Cascades."

Seldom, however, do we encounter unmitigated disappointment. If the object we aspire to be misunderstood by reason of its distance, or from the vivid colouring of imagination, we may, provided we

do not give ourselves up to lamentations over our mistake, find that the labour of attainment has not been altogether profitless. This not very profound reflection I made as I sat on a gravestone in the high-up churchyard I had gained.

The excursion of the eye over an extended plain, meandering through which you can note the slow progress of a river gently flowing, and where you can see trim meadows, and clipped hedges, and embowered farm-houses, and a mansion with woods clustering around, and villages, and village-spires, and sheep and kine, and people busy at their tasks —the excursion of the eye, I say, over a landscape such as these objects make up—is most cheering and grateful to the spirit. But to please what may be the idiosyncrasy of my taste, the country I now viewed around me was more attractive and mettlesome. As I looked down from my elevated point of observation, I formed on the spot a geological system of my own to account for the appearance of things. To adopt Cowper's view of the subject, I dropped my own "bucket" into my own "empty well." I

supposed that at some time or other, when the portion of our globe beneath me was settling into consistency, the area my eye took in must have been in a state of turbulent ebullition on a large scale, the fluid matter surging and boiling, and tumbling and tossing, and rising up in gigantic inflations and irregular heavings. I further supposed that while the throes of the agitated mass were most excessive and obstreperous, a sudden refrigeration had taken place, and that while yet rising and falling furiously, the boiling fluid had become solidified. Following my theory, which I have propounded to suit my purpose, I was now perched on the summit of one of the most riotous of the heaving waves.

Whether I looked east or west, north or south, there were nothing but hills and hollows. Some of these hills were conical, some more rounded in form, some ridgy and craggy, some of easy ascent, some precipitous—in fact, every form of hill you can conceive was there—no level spot—no plains—all irregularity. The greater number of the hills were green or cultivated, many were heath-clad,

some rocky and barren. Hills, hills, hills, endless hills! And then there were dells, and hollows, and defiles also, without limit. There were little wooded valleys, the foliage sometimes creeping up the adjacent ascents; there were dells choked up with furze and brushwood; there were gloomy, untraceable defiles—the whole appearance of the land vouching for the plausibility of my geological theory.

This topsy-turvy aspect of nature did not want its signs of life. Farm-houses, perched in shady spots, were numerous. And there were workers on the soil. I could see reapers, and hay-makers, and turf-cutters. And there were cattle up the hill-sides, and down in the hollows.

Then again, nothing could be more fantastic than the play of light and shadow over the uneven surface. Yonder, a spot of sunshine, close thereto, deep shadow—sunshine and shadow alternating in infinite variety wherever I looked from my grave-stone observatory. The bridge from which I had ascended was so immediately below me that I could not see it, but the sound of the tumbling river came to me, mellow and refreshing.

The sun, in his progress to the west, threw his lustre more positively in that direction than to north, or south, or east, and the features of the scene so lighted attracted my particular notice.

At the farthest point of vision I could see the ocean—the Bornoch bay I judged it to be—reflecting the full lustre of the sun's rays. I could trace the windings of the river for two miles of its course as it flowed towards me, rushing through a narrow dell, impatient and hurried. Here woods rose above it—there it chafed against rocks—anon the motion was grave and somewhat level. There was a mill on its banks, a mile away. I could not hear the clatter of the wheel, but I could discern its motion as it flung the spray from it in its evolutions. A favourable position for a mill that must be, for just above its site I could see the river precipitated down from a considerable height, the water glittering like a sheet of polished silver as it fell.

From the landscape below me I brought my inspection nearer home, to the immediate spot around.

CHAPTER III.

THE HILL-TOP CHURCHYARD, CONTINUED.

It is a truism neither new nor profound, that the visit to a churchyard induces the visitor to become a moralizer. And no wonder. The promptings to serious thought are everywhere around. For my own part, however, I seldom moralize in such places: in the present instance my cogitations were anything but deep or sombre.

Cemeteries on an extensive scale have been not unaptly termed "cities," and this hill-top place of rest to the weary might in that sense be called a "village of the dead." It was circumscribed in space, descending very little below the crown of the nearly-conical elevation. But a very populous vil-

lage it seemed to be ; not an inch of it unoccupied. For the most part its inhabitants must have been shoulder to shoulder as they lay "with their toes to the daisies." A good number of tombstones lay about—oblong slabs supported on low walls of masonry. These marked the final abodes of the defunct who had held a certain status while overground,—who had been thriving folk,—who had lived in snug houses, typified by comfortable "tombs" placed above them here. There were many ornamented head-stones, too, standing upright, some tall, some of middle height, some dwarfish. It was plain to me that beneath these, persons of lesser grade slept, while the respective heights of the head-stones might fairly be taken as exemplifying a descending scale in the sleeper's rank while his eyes possessed "speculation." There were a few—very few—railed-in monuments where aristocratic remnants lay apart from the throng. There were so-called "vaults" too, and of unique construction those vaults were, and thus formed, as far as I could judge. A portion of the slaty rock composing the hill being quarried away,

a recess was shaped: this was arched over, and the arch covered with sods: the front was then closed up, partly by masonry, and partly by a monumental slate: within the chamber thus formed the ornamented coffin was placed, where it reposed unsoiled by the churchyard clay. These "vaults" I regarded as the abodes of the "genteel" dwellers on the hill-top.

But these distinguishing marks were few in the high-up "village of the dead," as compared with the abodes of the unnoted population; those who had dwelt in hovels while alive outnumbered all the others by far. A slight elevation above the surface denoted *their* homes, a rough stone here and there, but of remembered shape, serving to mark to the kneelers who came of a Sunday to pray for those they had loved, where the remains of their dear ones lay.

Generally speaking, the Irish are religiously respectful towards the manes of their deceased relatives. But here one was pained by the sight of human remains overground. There is, however,

an inhospitable soil on this hill top; it must have been but half true to say, when the aborigines were interred here, that they had been "consigned to Mother Earth;"—little or no "earth," properly speaking, must there have been to receive them. At the present moment a very scanty sod is immediately underfoot; the early occupiers must have been laid in "narrow houses" scooped out from the rock. Now, when a new dweller comes, there is not room for him; an old inhabitant must be either entirely or partially displaced to give the incoming tenant accommodation. "Ejectment" must be resorted to here, as with the living, and hence the unsightly appearance of human relics and mouldering coffin-boards.

We take the monumental statuary of Westminster Abbey or of Père la Chaise as a fair average criterion whereby to form a judgment of respective artistic progress, in a national sense. And I see no reason why a parity should not exist, making all due allowances, as regards the stony-hearted churchyard of which I now write. I think the products of the

artist's chisel on the memorials of the dead in a country churchyard, offer reliable evidences as to the degree of sculptural skill attained in the locality.

I go farther even. From the tombstones and head-stones in a churchyard, I judge of the artistic gusto of the inhabitants of a certain area, taking the burial-place as the centre of a circle. I take it for granted that no one will pay for, and place over the remains he venerates, any production that does not come up to his idea of what the sculptor's chisel ought to realize. Reasoning thus, I arrive at two very important pieces of information; viz., the artistic skill of the district sculptor, and the artistic appreciation of his patrons. In other words, I thus obtain a reliable insight into the degree of civilization prevailing around me.

But before I examine the sculpture, I must notice what I regard as an example of praiseworthy economy and, I would call it, of wise forethought, which might elsewhere be followed with advantage: the ideas of one district transplanted to another, like the products of the soil, are often improved by

transmission. The monumental inscriptions on tomb or headstone were stereotyped repetitions, the one of the other; scarcely a deviation in any instance. The name of the person to whose memory the tablet had been inscribed was first given, with the age at time of death, and the date of demise. The reader was next made acquainted with him at whose expense the memorial had been raised, where he lived, and what occupation he followed. And then came the information that the monument had been erected in commemoration of a dead wife or husband, or father, or mother, as the case might be —and not only in commemoration of that dead person, but also of his or her posterity *ad infinitum*, —of the posterity then alive and well,—of the actual raiser of the monument,—of the scions of the family yet unborn. At the extreme termination of the mausoleum slab the usual petition, "*Requiescat in pace*," was chiselled, a large space being thus left whereon to inscribe the names of "the posterity" as they dropped off and came to the final home provided for them. I need not enlarge on the advan-

tages of such epitaphs as these in an economical point of view, or as a sage proviso against the possible falling off of worldly means, where such might happen to the posterity.

A connoisseur in painting will decide, from the tone of colouring, the mannerism of touch, and the peculiar ideality, as to the master who produced a doubtful picture. In like manner I was able to discern that the same artist's chisel had carved all the funereal sculptures that fell under my notice.

A representation of the crucifixion I found to be a favourite conception. I am deterred by the sacredness of it from criticising the manner in which this subject was dealt with. The same feeling does not control me, however, with regard to the angels and doves flying about in every direction, nor hold me back from passing a traveller's judgment on the other bas-reliefs embellishing the monuments.

There were certain characteristics distinguishing the angels I found here from any I had seen elsewhere, as the product of pencil or of mallet. None of the angels in this "village of the dead" were at

rest: all were in full flight, as if eagerly bent on the execution of a mission. They were all devoid of arms too, and the wings were inserted, not at their backs, where angels' wings are generally placed, but sprang immediately from the socket of the shoulder joint. The wings were not pointed in shape, that is, they were as unlike the wings of a swallow as could possibly be; indeed they bore no resemblance to the wings of any bird of the air that I know of. From the insertion to the extreme point the plumes were all of the same length, each plume shaped after the fashion of a horse-chestnut leaf, and indented pretty much alike. By this construction of wing, I understood the artist to convey the idea that his angels were better adapted for long flights than for speed. All the celestial messengers were without attire, and all so thin and spare that you could count the ribs along their sides. At first I could not reconcile this cadaverous appearance with my preconceived idea of angelic beauty. But on reflection, I understood it as a matter-of-fact delineation of ethereality.

A certain local mark of celestial mission I must not pass, inasmuch as a due regard of the insignia, when once understood, enabled me to correct my error when doubtful as to the being I examined. Sprouting from the head of each angel was a small cross,—not always elegantly formed, I must admit, and not always springing from the same place. Sometimes the small cross rose up from the centre of the forehead, sometimes from the right temple, and in some instances from the left. Although I have bestowed some attention on the matter, I have not been able up to this to satisfy myself why the artist should have affixed the emblem so differently, unless he would thereby denote a variety of individual character; the steady angel, I should say, wearing his cross in the centre of his forehead, the rakish angel over the left temple, the most intelligent, above the right.

There seemed to be grades of angels too. One I irreverently mistook at the first glance for the representation of an owl. The large, staring eyes, the solemnity of the fleshless face, the beak-like sharp-

ness of nose, the disposition of the hair, and a legless body, clipped round as if with a shears where the legs should spring from, led me to form this erroneous judgment, when the small cross above the forehead set me right. The want of legs in this instance I understood as typical of inferior rank. Another, having a cross springing up in the centre of the forehead, directly over the nose, and having, moreover two other crosses, one over each temple, I had no hesitation in regarding as an archangel.

I was particularly struck with the idea conveyed by the attitude of a third celestial. His ethereal legs (that is, ethereally denuded of human flesh) were carelessly crossed over each other above the knees, while he was upborne on his expansive and umbrageous pinions. I understood the pose to mean, that flying was no inconvenience to him, and that he enjoyed it.

Above a chalice the angel Gabriel soared,—his trumpet, fully as long as himself, plainly establishing his identity as the angel Gabriel. Both of the skin-

and-bone legs of the angel Gabriel were kicked up behind his back to the height of his shoulder. Certainly no disposition of limb would more distinctly denote what I took to be the artist's idea,—the intensity and vigour with which he discharged his mission of sounding the summons to the dead. I should remark that the angel Gabriel alone, of all angels round, was provided with a hand and arm, to enable him to grasp his trumpet. One only was given him; he had no necessity for a second, as he did not blow two trumpets.

I have said I would not exercise my critical propensities where the subject of the crucifixion called forth the artist's genius. This subject, with angels, and chalices, and doves were the chosen delineations around me. I must in candour admit that the chalices were not after any classic design I remember to have seen. And I must farther give it as my judgment that the doves were chiselled so as to give a character of pertness not belonging to this gentle bird. I am more inclined to bestow eulogy than condemnation, yet I must say that these monumental

doves bore a strong resemblance to sparrows,—as if the artist had adopted for his models the saucy birds he was accustomed every day to see.

As I perambulated over the graves, making my observations, I paused before one of the peculiarly constructed "vaults" I have described. I was induced to do so, as the inscriptions on the tablet varied somewhat from what I have called the stereotype that generally prevailed. I copy it from my note-book:—

"Erected over the remains of his dearly beloved and sainted mother, by Richard O'Meara.
In testimony of his love for her while living
And his reverence for her Memory.
Christian Reader,
Kneel and pray for a happy Eternity to the soul of
Mrs. Ellen O'Meara,
Who lies buried here—and who
died in her thirtieth year.
Requiescat in pace."

There was in this epitaph a tone of simple, unostentatious affection that interested me, and I obeyed the call made upon me. I knelt and prayed, as the son asked me to do. I then scanned the inscription

over, and was engaged imagining a biography for this young wife, when a low musical voice accosted me. Even the Irish brogue can be made musical by a pleasant, plaintive voice.

"May your prayer be heard, Sir, an' I am sure it will. If she isn't a blessed saint already she will be one. For she was good,—an' innocent,—an' comely. She died young, poor soul,—an' to my belief she died broken-hearted."

These words were addressed to me by a woman who was engaged spreading out her laundry on the gravestones. And verily no better spot could she have found for her purpose than the hill-top churchyard. For the sun shone down fully there; and there was a pleasant autumn breeze waving the rank grass and nettles, useful for her purpose as well as pleasant to the cheek. I had before casually noticed the woman; I now looked at her more closely. Never, no matter where, had I seen a pleasanter-looking person. I should say she might be about the age mentioned as that of Ellen O'Meara, for whom I had been praying, at the time of her

death,—thirty or thereabouts. She was in very humble garb, but there was a cleanliness and tidiness in her apparel, and in her manner of wearing it. I never saw a cap of more snowy whiteness than that which covered her wavy auburn hair; and to this there was imparted, by the ornamental muslin tie that fastened behind, an air of taste and simple decoration that struck me as very becoming. I saw that her legs were without stockings, and that her ankles were tiny and nicely rounded, and that as much as I saw above the ankle denoted symmetry. Although she spoke to me, I would say, sadly,—yet when I looked in her face there was a smile dimpling it. Not a smile of gaiety, certainly not. The smile of a kindly sympathizing nature it was. The hazel eyes beamed too, with the same expression. "This woman," I said to myself, "is a gentle, amiable, placid creature, cheerful, and hopeful, and blessed with peace of heart." Her smile and look told me all this. As it is very vulgarly expressed, I forthwith "cottoned to her."

"You knew the person who lies buried here?" I asked.

"Oh! then surely I did—knew her well,—and loved her well. 'Twas in my arms she drew her last breath, my poor, loving sufferer!—May Heaven be your bed!"

She bowed her head, crossed her forehead, and looked upward fervently as she said this. And yet she smiled notwithstanding. I approached, and sat on a tomb near her.

"Every grave here," I said—I felt, somehow, she would understand me,—"every grave here has a tale connected with it, if one could only hold converse with the tenants."

"Indeed, Sir, what you say is truth. There was never one born that couldn't tell something worth hearing."

"I should like to know something of the young wife whose epitaph I have been reading."

"An' how do you know but I'd tell it to you?"

The smile changed; its sadness partly passed away. She now smiled good-humouredly and her dimples were deeply indented.

"I shall be most thankful if you will."

"You're not from these parts, Sir—I'll go bail you're a Forneyagh?"

"A Forneyagh I am, verily."

"An' you're over among the Bornochs?"

"You have guessed aright."

"Is it making too free to ask where you're stopping there?"

"Not in the least too free. I have put up my quarters at the little hotel immediately fronting the sea."

Here my questioner bent her head a little towards her left shoulder, and looked at me askance, and her smile became mirthful, and her hazel eyes twinkled.

"I'd lay a bet that Miss Jenny gives you good ating an' dhrinking?"

"Not better. Quite as good as I need wish for."

"Ham an' chickens?"

"Yes."

"An' roast an' boiled beef an' mutton, an' turkeys, an' all sorts?"

"Exactly."

"An' fried eggs,—an' good tay,—an' fish alive out of the bay?"

"She does indeed—all this."

"Ah!—then how I pity you, my poor man!"

And she bent her head and laughed a tiny laugh. During the colloquy she continued to manipulate her clothes as she placed them to dry.

"Miss Jenny Ryan takes good care of her boarders,—as long as their purses jingle at any rate. —By coorse you know Michael Hanrahan?"

"Certainly, certainly. I could not be at Miss Jenny's hotel without knowing Michael—if you mean the waiter."

"As for the matter of being waiter, Sir, I b'lieve poor Michael puts his hand to everything. He gives a help at the cooking, he tosses the beds with the girl, he polishes the knives an' forks, he goes of arrands,—an'——"

"He dances."

"Oh!—you may say that!—An' well does he know how!"

"You seem to be well acquainted with my friend Michael?"

There was downright quiet humour in her laugh as she again bent her head aside, her dancing eyes peering at me as before.

"Ah!—why wouldn't I know poor Michael, when he belongs to me?—Don't you see—here's his cravat that I'll iron out for him most beautiful." And she held out a square of the whitest possible muslin.

"And them are Michael's," as she pointed to certain inner garments, "and them's his aprons that he wears afore him attending at the dinner."

"You are Michael's wife then?"

"His downright wedded wife I am, no less. To have an' to hould, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health,—'till death do us part. You see I don't forget one word of all I promised him. An' 'tis far from my intention to forget it, with Heaven's help!"

"Michael has been most fortunate in his choice of a wife, at all events."

"I'm not half good enough for him I can tell you."

"You seem much attached to him."

"That I am, the poor fellow—an' why wouldn't I? Michael would make a queen of me if he could, an' I take the will for the deed—that's my way."

"And an excellent way it is."

"I suppose, Sir, you didn't come to this time of your life without getting married?"

"I am a married man truly."

"An' by looking at you, Sir, I think you have a wife that takes care of you."

"No doubt of that either."

"Well, all I can tell you about it is this. If you had a cross-grained, cantankerous wife at home, I'd give you my advice to swim out in the say so far that you couldn't come back, sooner than go home to her again."

I spent nearly an hour very pleasantly in such badinage as this with Mary, the wife of Michael Hanrahan, the waiter at the little hotel where I boarded. Finally she informed me that she lived in

what I have named "the Town of the Cascades." That she had taken charge of a spa flowing from the cliff within a short distance of the Bornoch village, the water of which, as she averred, "would put iron moulds" on anything it touched. That her business at this spa was to fill tumblers of the water for such of the "Forneyaghs" as "thought it wholesome to have salt wather without an' rusty wather within." That I would find her at this spa every morning early, and every evening, "sitting undher a little cobbey-house" she had contrived in the cliffs, an' in which she would make room for me. And there, if I wished it, she would satisfy my curiosity as to the young wife for whose repose I had prayed.

"But," said I, "will not Michael be jealous if you and I sit so much together?"

"Don't you be one bit afeard of that, Sir dear. Michael would thrust me to sit with a younger—ay an' a comelier man than yourself—if it be not making too free to say so. But indeed Michael has no sort of fear on him for me—an' he needn't either."

And so, although I found in the hill-top churchyard no time-honoured relics such as I had reckoned on, yet the view of the peculiar scenery I have sketched,—the examination of the burial-ground,—but above all, the narrative I owe to Mary Hanrahan, repaid me for the clamber upwards.

I trust the perusal may recompense my readers for having borne me company thither.

CHAPTER IV.

BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM.

If it be not known to every one, it ought to be, that it is unlucky to get married in May. But sooner than put the cup away from the lip, people will often run risks.

Now I would advise my young friends not to precipitate matters so as to make it a "needs must" to enter the marriage state in the month of May. Let them spend that month making their arrangements, and take the irrevocable pledge the month following. Let them not henceforward plead ignorance of the matter.

It was a beautiful day in May, when a chaise drove towards the bridge overlooking the cascades

I have described. There were white cockades, with ribbon-streamers flying therefrom, decorating the horses' heads. There were four horses, and, necessarily, two postilions,—and the postilions' hats bore white cockades also. Within the carriage sat the bride and bridegroom.

When ascending the bridge, the rapid pace of the horses was slackened at an intimation from the bridegroom: the face of the bride was seen at the window looking down the river, and the bridegroom's face was seen close to hers, and he was pointing in the direction of the water as he spoke, visibly engaged describing something. And the bride once or twice looked up and smiled in her bridegroom's face.

The inhabitants of six or seven small houses at the country-side of the bridge had all rushed out as the chaise drove up. The chaise and four was of itself sufficient to bring out the men and women and children, but the wedding favours in addition set them all on tiptoe.

It had been generally bruited that "Turney

O'Meara" had been married, or was to be married. As sure as the day this must be "Turney O'Meara;" and wasn't he bringing home his bride in style! Ha! never fear him!—he was the very fellow to make the most of it. This was the gist of the gazers' observations.

But the manner in which the inmates of the carriage were engaged fell particularly under the observation of a tall, robust man who was standing rigidly erect near the centre arch of the bridge. He had his own leg at one side of his body, and a substitute leg at the other; the back of his left hand rested against the peak of his gray beaver hat in the style of a military salute, and his blackthorn cudgel, point downwards, was extended from him to the full length of his right arm—in military salute also. The bridegroom happening to look down, recognized the accolade by lifting his hat and bowing, laughing the while. And the bride, smiling cordially, gracefully bent her head. Then the carriage, making quicker progress, drove on.

There was a great hubbub in the main street as

it progressed. Those living far up the road run fast down to have a view: those more fortunate, by whose doors the equipage passed, rushed out to the full extent of the footway, and very cordial salutations were given and returned.

Down by the little post-office the postilions cautiously guided their horses on to the carriage-road running along the river. A little beyond the cottage residence I have before described they went, —turned short to the right, and stopped at a small gate that opened into the flower-garden I have mentioned as immediately before the cottage windows. Here the bridegroom sprang lightly from the vehicle, and lifting out his bride, placed her beside him. He gave a few rapid directions to the postilions, who passed on with the carriage to the rear of the premises, while, arm-in-arm, the young couple went through the flowers and approached the cottage.

And here a few words descriptive of them will not be amiss.

The bridegroom was as fine a specimen of manly

beauty as you could see. He was tall, fully six feet in height; his chest was ample; there was an undulating taperness from his shoulders to the extremity of his limbs; there was an elastic springiness in his movements, resulting from the perfection of his proportions, and set in motion by the buoyancy of his nature. There was an exuberant and even an ardent gaiety in his dark eye; even at rest, there was a smile on his lips, ready to expand to merriment. But his dress was rather dashing than in good taste. In the way he wore his hat, a little to one side of his head, together with his genial air, and other characteristics, there was what would compel you to admit that you looked at a man brimful of animal spirits and of sanguine temperament.

The bride, with every look and movement, gave you the idea of gentle unobtrusiveness, of clinging dependence, of entire devotion to her husband. She was beautiful, too, but you forgot to examine the shape of her features, you were so engrossed by their loveliness of expression.

"And this is to be your home, my Ellen," said the bridegroom to his bride; "unworthy of you, but still our home, my own little wife."

"And a sweet, sweet home you have brought me to, Richard. We shall be so happy here, dear Richard!"

"Happy, indeed, my bird—gloriously happy—if *I* can make you so. I have been, up to this, a careless sort of fellow,—paying little regard to the interests of No. 1, as they call it; but now that one and one added together make but one still"—and the bridegroom drew his bride close to him—"I will become another man. I will change to be as sober and as steady as any big-wigged judge that ever sat upon the bench."

"Don't try to be over-serious, Richard; your smile I delight to see. It is my very sunshine. Ah! I should wither beneath your frown!"

"Frown!—my *frown*, Ellen!—why I hardly know how to frown, my beautiful bride: frowns are not natural to me, I believe. But were my eyebrows frozen together, one look from those beloved

eyes of yours, sweet Ellen, would thaw them asunder. No, no!—Not only will I not frown myself, but let me see who shall dare to cast a cloud over one of my Ellen's days with even a curl of the brow. Frown on you, my wife! Impossible! Impossible!"

"Then happy shall we be in this smiling little home of ours, dearest Richard."

"If we be not, there never were two beings happy since the world began. Ha! is that you, Teague? You are the first to greet us, my honest fellow."

These latter words were addressed by the bridegroom to a splendid mastiff who came bounding down the pathway towards him. Teague, having reached the object of his welcome, did not frisk about, and caper,—and whine, as a smaller and less dignified specimen of the canine race would have done,—but he elevated his head, looked with the most intense affection into his master's eyes, and sent forth from his expansive chest a modulated, rumbling, and most expressive bow-wow that no one could misinterpret. It meant "*cead mille faultha*" to you,

Richard O'Meara," as unmistakably as a dog could give a salutation utterance.

Teague was a noble dog, one of the true mastiff breed seldom seen now-a-days. His coat was of light tan-colour, streaked down the sides with dark brown; his chest and paws were white; his head, gear coloured like his sides. He was of large dimensions, and apparently of powerful strength. Teague never yelped,—I take the yelp to be a dog's laugh, or an expression of his peevishness, according to modulation. Teague was a silent dog; but there was an eternal, good-natured smile in his eye as he met you, provided you and he were acquaintances. He was never surly; serious, however, he certainly was. I have said that Teague was a silent dog, that is, a dog of few words. He did not waste his speech in clatter or gabble; when he bayed at night to warn irregular characters from entering on his domain, a single deep bark at intervals he considered sufficiently significant.

Teague was not a prancing, curveting dog. His motions were deliberate, and there was a self-appre-

ciation in his mien, free, however, from what is styled dogmatism, that gave you to understand he regarded himself as an animal having heavy responsibilities on him, requiring deep thought and prudent deliberation. A stranger would at once understand the meaning of his look to be: "I have my eye on you; it is not my intention to do you an injury without good and substantial cause. I have studied human nature closely, and *you* are an object of study to me this moment. Do not imagine you can impose on me by appearances. If you have no bonâ fide business here, or if your motive for coming be an objectionable one, the sooner you move off the better. Take my word, I am not to be trifled with; you will have reason to regret it if I find it necessary to expel you by force from the premises I have in charge."

No stranger could doubt, as Teague walked round him and eyed him, that could the dog have spoken this would have been his address.

I must here acknowledge that I tread on dangerous ground in the introduction of even so respectable

a dog as Richard O'Meara's into this narrative. Some of the best "characters" drawn by the unrivalled Charles Dickens are his dogs. The tales wherein they act could not go on half so well without them. Their agencies are nearly indispensable, Their individualities, personal and mental, are brought out as distinctly from the canvas, and are as visible to the reader's eye as any other of the characters painted by that master's hand. I know well, therefore, that it is a dangerous experiment on my part to make my readers acquainted with Teague. It is a matter of necessity with me however. It will be seen in time that on a particular and important occasion Teague played a principal part.

CHAPTER V.

THE BRIDE AND TEAGUE ARE INTRODUCED TO EACH OTHER. THE WELCOME HOME.

"COME hither, my poor Teague, come hither," said the bridegroom to his dog. When he began to speak, Richard O'Meara's right arm was round his bride's waist, and his left hand clasped her right. Gently he pledged his confidence that she might pat the tawny sides of Teague. "Come, my poor Teague, come here and welcome your mistress home," the bridegroom repeated. Teague wagged his tail, not in jerks, but slowly and steadily, striking his sides with it as it vibrated with a wide sweep. And he looked smilingly into the speaker's face, anxious to understand the meaning of the words addressed to him.

"This is your mistress, Teague, your beautiful mistress. Your allegiance must henceforward be divided, and your responsibilities doubled. You must be a loving, dutiful dog to your young mistress, Teague. You must help your master to be careful of her, my old dog."

Did the dog comprehend the address? I will not undertake to answer yea or nay to this query.

But Teague's acts seemed to imply that he did. First he proceeded to ascertain his mistress's identity by scent. This point being settled to his satisfaction, he discovered her hand where it rested by her side. And the hand being ungloved, Teague ventured to pass his tongue over it, in the gentlest manner. She did not withdraw it; the liliest, silkiest hand would not be hurt or soiled by the contact. Then Teague caressed the soft hand with his head; then he rubbed himself tenderly to her dress. And he looked up at her, as a knight might look at his lady when passing the gallery of beauty at a tourney. Then moving twice or thrice round the bride and bridegroom as they stood, Teague

took his position a few paces in advance of them. Having looked round to ascertain their will, he discarded all strong expressions of feeling from his face, assumed a pleased, business-like expression of countenance, and walked leisurely along towards the door of the cottage, glancing over his shoulder now and again as he progressed, as much as to say, "I think this is the road, but it is well to be certain."

"You will find in honest Teague, Ellen, the most intelligent, the fondest, and, next to myself, the most devoted of servitors. You will become attached to him, as he will be to you, from this moment."

"'Love me, love my dog,' dear Richard, shall be the groundwork of our intimacy. Yes, Teague and I will be fast friends. I dare promise for both."

Teague was not the only one to welcome Richard O'Meara and his bride. Within the leaf-covered porch, projecting beyond the entrance door, stood a young man and a young girl—a very young girl indeed. The young man might be about twenty, and was not above middle height. His was a pale

flabby face, that looked even paler than need be when taken in contrast with his large, jet black whiskers, and jet black hair, which hair was divided in the middle and combed back over his ears. So far as the mouth could give indication of character —and is it not the most expressive feature? he had, according to the Irish definition, "an open countenance;" for the mouth was very wide indeed. You would be puzzled to say whether it was simplicity or canniness that stared at you from his large grey eyes. There was a mixture of both these opposite qualities, taking the expression of mouth and eyes together. And there was good-humour and good-nature not easily ruffled. So that although you should feel puzzled, as I have said, you felt inclined to become better acquainted with the owner of the pale round face and staring eyes and full, expansive mouth. He was dressed smartly: his waistcoat was as yellow as saffron; his blue body-coat was decorated with two rows of very shining gilt buttons; and from his hips down his person was covered with a snow-white apron.

The girl standing by the young man's side was low, and plump, and tidy. Her attire was neatness itself from top to toe, but you overlooked her personal decorations to note the shiny waviness of her auburn hair, the pleasant twinkling of her hazel eyes, the bloom of her peachy and peach-shaped cheeks, the dimples that played incessantly round her red lips; for however varied the smile might be, according to the temper of her mind, the lips were never without a smile, either of condolence, of affection, of merriment, or of good-nature.

Such were Michael Hanrahan and Mary Malone in the days of their courtship. The same Michael Hanrahan this was that I knew subsequently as waiter and so forth at the little Bornoch hotel. And the same Mary it was whom I met in the hill-top churchyard, and from whose still smiling lips I gained the incidents of this narrative, whilst seated with her in her "cobbey house" in the cliff above the Bornoch bay.

Teague having preceded his master and his mistress, as he now understood the new comer to be,

and having ascertained that all was right so far, set him down on the sanded patch outside the cottage door. He took his place at seemly dog's distance, a privileged and interested looker-on at further proceedings. And he eyed all movements attentively, as one who felt himself bound to enter every particular in his note-book, to be pondered over at leisure, as a reference by which to regulate future actions. His tail, which projected behind, described a semicircle in the sand, the motion ceasing now and again as some occurrence took place requiring thought, and then vibrating to and fro anew as his mind became enlightened.

Michael Hanrahan stood, as I have said, on the threshold of the cottage door, with Mary Malone beside him. When the bride and bridegroom came in sight, Michael's body, bending at the hips, swayed up and down, and his arms accompanied the motion of his body, this bending and rising being meant for a repetition of bows, and the accompanying movement of the arms significant of the most heartfelt welcome.

"Welcome, welcome! A thousand welcomes home to our young couple," he cried. "Welcome, again and again, to the master and mistress of the house."

Here Michael's forehead nearly touched his toes in the energy of his greeting. He so remained doubled for a purpose. He twisted his flexible and redundant lips altogether on one side, and addressed the curtsying and smiling Mary through an acoustic instrument thus formed:

"She's a posy, Mary,—a posy, God bless her!"

Another uprise, and another lengthened bend.

"Welcome, welcome home!—Mary—a posy she is surely!"

The movement repeated. Another loud "Welcome!" and another aside—

"A rose, Mary,—a lily, Mary,—a posy of posies, Mary!"

Aloud again:

"Wouldn't doubt you, Masther Dick, but you'd pluck a rosebud!"

"My good Michael," said the laughing 'Masther

Dick,' "there's a contradiction in all this. You are, to all appearance, giving us a hearty welcome, but you won't allow us to cross the threshold. Don't you see how you and Mary fill up the doorway?"

"Well, well, may I never!—Isn't that a prime joke, sure?—Mary, lave the way, and let in the young couple!" And pulling Mary with him, Michael retreated within the hall.

"Faith I'd open the door of my heart t'ye, not to talk of the door of the house. You're welcome, Ma'am, mighty welcome to us. Walk this way, Ma'am, this is our parlour." And Michael opened a door at the right-hand side of the hall. "This is our parlour, Ma'am, and welcome you are to it. May you be happy; may you be joyful; and may sorrow never put foot over the threshold you cross."

"My Ellen, this is Michael Hanrahan," said the bridegroom. "He and I are foster-brothers. My friend Michael wishes to be known as one who often says foolish things, but Michael is not a fool. He is an honest, good fellow, and when his foster-

brother takes Michael's advice, he doesn't go wrong."

The bride looked pleasantly at Michael, and he basked in the sunniness of her gentle smile. She gently took his hand.

"We shall be good friends, I think, Michael and I," she said kindly.

"May heaven's angels be round you and with you," answered Michael, as he ushered the way into "their parlour." And the door closed on the bride and bridegroom.

CHAPTER VI.

NORA.

Michael Hanrahan looked across the hall at Mary.

"Mary, isn't she a posy?"

"Indeed an' sure she is, Michael, as beautiful a young creature as ever my eyes rested on."

"Well, Masther Dick, if you haven't the luck, never mind it. And now, with heaven's help, happy times are in store for us." Michael paused, grimaced at Mary, and took a sudden and rather singular way of manifesting his glee. In a boyish, but not unmusical voice, he began singing the air of "Haste to the wedding," thus:—

"Bow-wow-diddle-dee-iddy
Bow-wa-diddle dee-dee-dee—"

and so on. And he danced with great agility about the hall, exhibiting his most complex steps—the "diddle-dee-dee-dee" executed with an intricacy puzzling to follow with the eye.

"Sure there isn't such a dancer as Michael in the County Clare," said Mary to me, when she had reached this part of her narrative.

"You and I agree on that point, Mary. The other night he seized on a wandering piper, and brought him into the kitchen of the hotel. And he danced half through the night, until he was footsore. He was only able to hobble about next day."

"Ha, ha, ha! The poor fellow! When his heart is glad he dances for the gladness' sake. An' what's curious in him, poor boy, I've seen him dancing away his sorrow. Ay, indeed, Sir! But in good deed, if you were looking at him that day in the hall, the very heart in your buzzum would jump with pleasure to see him. Ah, ha! How do you think he finished off his 'Haste to the wedding,' Sir?"

"Why, with some pattern step, I suppose, such as I have seen him myself perform."

"There's no doubt but he done the 'legs across' in a way you'd like to see, Sir. You'd think he was on wires, he was so supple. But, ha ha! he went farther than that. I couldn't help moving my head this way from shouldher to shouldher; no more could I help moving my hands this way at both sides of me, keeping time to the tune. Well, my honest Michael dances round, until he comes close to me, and then he does the step in real style, an' then,—when I wasn't thinking of the like no more than I am thinking of the like now.—he had me round the neck with both his arms, and before I could blink my eye, the rogue—kissed me. Well, well!"

"Ah!—of course you were very angry, Mary?"

"Why, Sir, I purtended to be in a rage. But I wasn't—an' the rogue knew I wasn't. Somehow, I never could feel angry with Michael, poor fellow, —an' you couldn't look cross when you wern't cross, you know, Sir."

"You are not often cross, Mary, I am sure."

"Well, Sir, I don't know that; I suppose I was often contrary enough. But never with Michael," she added; "'twould be a pity to vex you, Michael, for you never vexed me!"

"Teague, good dog, did you ever see her equal since the day you were pupped?"

This was Michael's question to the mastiff when he had coaxed the ill-humour out of Mary that was not in her at all. Teague had looked on at the dance of "Haste to the wedding" with manifest approval. Once or twice even, he stood up, and seemed inclined to take part in the capering. But that, on reflection, he considered this out of character for a steady dog like himself. As Michael put the above query to Teague, he rested both hands on his knees, and placed his own nose in contact with Teague's. The dog's eyes laughed, and opening his jaws he murmured a pleased assent to the interrogatory.

"Ah! didn't I guess your thoughts, Teague?

We have a mistress that's worth guarding; and if the world was turned topsy-turvy, you and I will stand by our posy to the last gasp." And he patted the dog's side lustily.

When Michael turned again into the hall, after he had exchanged opinions with Teague, his exuberance of glee appeared to quit him.

Partly filling up a passage leading to the inferior portion of the cottage, was a young woman. She stood there with her arms folded hard across her chest, and otherwise in a rigid, unfeminine attitude. She had been there, so standing, when the bridegroom and bride had entered; but in Michael's exuberance of delight he had not noticed her. She now attracted his observation.

"Nora, you look as black as the thunder-cloud," he said, reprovingly. "There is no welcome for our bride in your face, Nora."

"Every one isn't to be a play-boy like to Michaleen Hanrahan," the girl answered, in a surly tone.

The half Merry-Andrew expression of Michael's face left it altogether. He became serious at once.

And with his seriousness an intellectuality you would not have expected as belonging to his character was in his eye and about his mouth. He approached close to the scowling girl, and spoke with quiet seriousness to her, while he held up his forefinger and shook it at her.

"I understand you, Nora," he said. "Be on your guard. I'll keep my eye on you, depend upon it."

"Faugh! you capering brat!" cried the girl, violently, while her black brow beetled over her eye of jet, and her finely-formed lips were distorted with anger and disdain.

"Keep your eyes on your own affairs, Michaleen Hanrahan, or I'll thrust them out with this finger, an' make a blind man of you."

She pushed the finger suddenly forward, and Michael retreated a step or two.

"Nora, you have no business to be undher this roof longer, and you must leave it."

"Michaleen Hanrahan! my right to be here is beyond your right. And let me see the one to

remove me from it. Michaleen Hanrahan! you gave me a warning. Take another warning from me. If you meddle or make with *me*, 'tisn't that grinning *ownshuch* beyond you'll have to deal with."

So saying, Nora turned and was gone.

Michael's face could not lose colour under any circumstances, as it had no colour to lose. Therefore it was not unusually pale when he turned to Mary. But his lips, which were generally of a deep red, were blanched and bloodless. He took Mary by the arm, and the right forefinger which he had shaken at Nora he now raised at Mary.

"Remember, I tell you, Mary! There is sin and mischief brewing in Nora Spruhan's dark mind."

"Ah! then, Michael, you'll find there isn't. She's vexed a little because she couldn't lave the kitchen to put on her good clothes, an' to meet the masther an' misthress. She'll come round, Michael. Don't look so frightened, my poor boy."

Mary smiled her affectionate, soothing smile as she spoke.

"Mischief there is in her, Mary. Not the young girl's mischief that teaches them to put the heart across in the boys. That kind of mischief comes by nature to them,—that mischief they get as a gift,—that they will use, and that they may!—as long as the world is a world. 'Tisn't *that* sort of mischief that is in Nora Spruhan. 'Tis the mischief that comes of sin. *That* you know nothing about, Mary, *acuishla*, and with God's help you will never know anything about it. And that you may never have thoughts the like of Nora Spruhan's thoughts, is the wish of my heart for you, Mary!"

Mary here paused in her recital.

"Wouldn't any one be fond of Michael, Sir?" she asked me. "He was so pleasant, an', above all, he was so good!"

"I must say, Mary, that your affections were well placed."

"Indeed an' in thruth they were!" assented Mary fervently.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BONFIRE.

"ONCE more, welcome to your future home, my Ellen," said Richard O'Meara to his bride, as he closed the door of the room into which Michael Hanrahan had ushered them. "Come, look as if you were at home indeed. This bonnet must no longer screen *my* locks of burnished gold, nor shall this big shawl disguise my Ellen's form. Now, sunbeam of my cottage and of my heart, welcome, welcome."

And Richard O'Meara tenderly embraced his wife. And he felt the gentle pressure of her arms around his neck, which, gentle though it was, was yet more felt than if a cable's utmost strain had bound him.

"Now I must reconcile the bird I have captured to the prison provided for her. But our journey has been long, and perhaps has wearied you, Ellen?"

"Not a bit, Richard, not one bit. And have I not a stout arm to cling to were the expedition even long and toilsome."

Ellen was placing her arm within her husband's as she spoke, looking, as she felt, all sunny happiness.

"That will never do, Ellen; the side where my heart beats, if you please,—unless it be your wish it should shift from left to right to be near you."

Ellen tripped round, and, passing her arm through that offered her, she clasped the slender fingers of both hands together, and leaned with all her might thereon, so intimating her sense of confidence in the stability of her support, looking up into her husband's face as a young and happy bride alone can look.

And thus they went through the cottage from room to room; the bridegroom affecting to depre-

ciate the really elegant little home he had provided for his gentle wife, Ellen murmuring her approval of everything she saw. And she spoke her real thoughts, for all was *couleur de rose* around her.

I will not dog the footsteps of the young couple as they take their domestic tour. Newly-married people do not, for some time following their bridal, feel desirous of the presence of strangers. It is known to all that there is a honey-moon to succeed the marriage-vow, a honey-moon that shines for two persons only, and whose soft beams are but interrupted by the presence of others. Those who have enjoyed the lustre of this planet need no description of the peculiar radiance shed by it. Others, who have not, will best appreciate the mellow influence of the light when, after due preliminary, they change their state of singleness. This I can say to all, that no honey-moon shines on the unwedded.

Michael Hanrahan, according to Mary's judgment of whom, "any one would be fond of," did not exercise the same delicacy. No matter which

way the bride and bridegroom turned, there was Michael Hanrahan's pale, round, flabby face. He was there ostensibly as an exhibitor, and to open doors and so forth; but he was there in reality to gratify himself by looking at the "posy," which title he had adopted as an expressive one. While he ran here and there to intercept "the progress" or "the dominions," he nudged and pulled Mary. "Run, Mary, your sowl!" he would say, "run and we'll have another peep at the posy." And so Mary would scamper after Michael, and by that means she was often at his side, curtsying and smiling, as Mary only knew how to smile.

That no part of the geography of the new abode might be unnoted by the bride, Michael led the way to the kitchen, where he pointed out the various delicacies in preparation for the first repast she was to grace as mistress of the house. Here Nora Spruhan was at work.

Nora's welcome to her young mistress was affectedly lowly and obsequious. But the gentle Ellen shrank before the intense scowl of Nora's

lustrous dark eyes. And this expression of hatred was changed to deriding scorn as she glanced at the gentleman-usher, while he threatened her with his fist behind backs.

Night was covering with her sable pall the flowers and foliage outside the cottage windows. The birds had done singing, and had established themselves under their respective leafy canopies. The honey-moon alone shone into the pretty drawing-room, where bride and bridegroom, seated together on a sofa, murmured to each other in the tone with which the dove accosts its mate. All at once, a flash of ruddy light, bursting through the windows, paled the beams of the gently-shining honey-moon. The bride clung to the bridegroom, and the bridegroom himself was not wholly unalarmed. Almost simultaneously with the illumination of the room, there arose a loud shout of human voices. Then there was a discharge of ordnance, then a more vociferous shout. After a while there was a second discharge, followed by more shouting. And this went on for some time.

"As I live," said the bridegroom, after listening awhile to the clamour, "they have got up a bonfire on the road to celebrate our arrival."

And he was right in his surmise. A bonfire there was on the road beyond the cottage, and in this wise had it been provided. The whole display was owing to Michael Hanrahan's exertions.

From the rear of the premises he had brought a quantity of straw and firewood; on these he had piled peat sods, or turf, as the Irish term is. At first one or two youngsters had looked on at his proceedings; these he enlisted as his assistants. By degrees there were many urchins aiding Michael; the numbers went on increasing, and detachments were sent out to scour through "The Town of the Cascades," and seize on any combustibles they could lay hands on. So that in a very short time there was a pyramid of very creditable height and bulk. By the time this pile was ready for ignition, a crowd of old and young, of both sexes, had assembled. The brand could not be applied while the sun was looking on, and his departure was impa-

tiently waited for. Ignition did not immediately take place, but as soon as the fire flamed up, up rose with it the celebrating shout of those assembled. Thus are the red glare of light and the huzzaing that startled the bride and bridegroom satisfactorily accounted for.

The discharge of ordnance is next to be explained. If any one curious about the matter will accompany me to the carriage road running parallel with the river, he will there see a circle of demon-like beings, — demon-like, because half their bodies to all appearance are red hot,—who, with joined hands, are capering as demons might be supposed to caper about the fire. The fire is so splendid in its way, that it colours trees and rocks and all other objects a glowing red, and the falling water of the cascades is like molten lead as it tumbles. And the demon who jumps highest of all the capering circle is Michael Hanrahan, his face no longer pale, but positively ignited whenever you catch a glimpse of it.

Within the rampant circle of demons, his person thoroughly illuminated, you see a stout-bodied man

seated. You can note his face quite distinctly. You think him a grim-looking fellow; he does not seem to share in the excitement and half-crazy mirth going on around him. For his brows are knit hard over his eyes, and his bony jaws look as if they were locked together. He has two chairs in requisition; on one of them he is seated, the other is placed in front of him, and on it rests an object that arouses your curiosity. It is not a leg, certainly, that you see, though it appears to issue from that part of the body whence a leg should protrude. And see!—there are four,—ay, six,—active little fellows bustling about this puzzling object;—look now!—a tiny, but brilliant jet of sparks rises straight up, and before you have time to judge what this may portend, there issues from the extremity of whatever it may be that rests on the second chair, a hasty and angry flame. And simultaneously, a deafening detonation is heard; the six little fellows, who for the moment have been passive, toss themselves about like mad imps, the prancers rush round with increased velocity, and the welkin rings with the

huzza of the assembled crowd, big and little as they are.

Taking the data I have given, I will for the present leave the friend who has accompanied me to this scene, to speculate upon the mysterious piece of ordnance I have so far described, engaging, however, to make all clear in due course.

There never was a bonfire in Ireland, the magic radiance of which did not exercise an attractive power on some professor of music to draw him within its playground—the blaze. The little "Town of the Cascades" was not without its resident performer, and in due time "Donnegan the Piper" emerged from a lane off the main street, and made his appearance at Michael Hanrahan's conflagration. And with real cordiality was "Donnegan the Piper" welcomed. The mysterious piece of ordnance had disappeared from the chair it had rested on to make place for the musician. The piper was blind, but he had no lack of eager assistants and servitors. Michael Hanrahan himself enthroned Donnegan the Piper in the immediate neighbourhood of the man with the

grim jaws and knitted brows. And as soon as Donnegan the Piper had screwed his instrument together, and prepared it for the performance of its office, away went his elbow, and away pranced the dancers, and jigs and reels became the order of the night.

And now Michael Hanrahan was in his element, and the intricacy of his steps, and the accuracy with which he marked every bar of the music against the road with his feet, and the airiness of his bound, and the humour of his flings as he changed places with his partner, drew forth universal plaudits. And Michael "danced to" Mary Malone first, you may be sure; and then he "danced to" many others. And then, while giving place to "fresh boys," and wiping his teeming face, the thought struck him to appoint a deputation, and invite the bride and bridegroom to the sport.

Capering all the way from the bonfire to the cottage, he soon appeared before the young couple, and putting on his most foolish grin, and bowing, and panting, and speaking in catches of breath, he communicated the unanimous request of the neighbours,

"that Masther Richard and the darlin' new misthress would come and have a look at the fun that was going on." Michael might well call this a "unanimous invitation," inasmuch as not having asked any one's consent but his own, no one could disagree with him.

The bride consulted the bridegroom's face, and the bridegroom being one who had never yet cried "stop!" whenever mirth was to be found, gallantly provided the bride's bonnet and shawl, and led her forth to the scene of impromptu festivity.

On their way they were preceded, first by Michael Hanrahan, bearing two chairs on his head; then by the dog Teague. Teague's ears were watchfully erect, and his eyes glared with astonishment in the direction of the unaccountable noise and light. Twice he paused and looked back to ascertain how those he had in keeping were thereby affected, or if they wished him to gallop on and put an end to the riotous assembly. Perceiving in them no symptoms of alarm or displeasure, he became reassured, and trotted on, wondering, to be sure, and curious, but not feeling called on to interfere.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DANCE.

Michael re-entered the crowd crying out to "make way." If there could be any doubt as to the unanimity of the invitation conveyed by the deputation, Michael Hanrahan, the acclaim with which the visitors were received would have dispelled it. In answer to the cheers of welcome, the bridegroom waved his hat round his head, while the bride gracefully bowed her acknowledgments. Very quickly they were installed on the chairs brought by the deputation, the bridegroom's seat being next to that of the man with the grim jaws and staring eyes; that of the bride beside the bridegroom. Before sitting down, Richard O'Meara cordially shook hands with

his neighbour. "Colonel," he said, "I am delighted to meet you so stout and well. I had the pleasure of seeing you on the bridge to-day as I came home, and thank you for the 'present arms' you gave me."

"Was there—saw you.—Joy, boy—joy, boy!"

The answer was given in four snaps of the apparently locked jaws, which opened and closed abruptly with each separate snap. There was no cheeriness in the salutation, nor did the knitting of the brows relax, or the sternness of the eyes abate. The shake of the hand was cordially returned, however.

"Let me introduce the 'Colonel' to you, Ellen," said the bridegroom to the bride.

The "Colonel" was erect in an instant, as erect as was ever colonel in front of his regiment. And as he so stood, it became clear that the ordnance from which the repeated salvos had proceeded really formed the support of his body at the right side. The "Colonel" looked with such intensity into the soft blue eyes of the timorous bride, that she

winced beneath his stare. With the left hand he raised his gray beaver hat to the full extent of his upraised arm, and with a twirl of his wrist brought his cudgel to a salute. In this position he continued without speaking until Ellen and her husband sat down. Then, replacing his hat slowly, he sat down also.

There had been a short cessation of the dancing on the arrival of the new comers. The pastime was again set going by Michael Hanrahan, who tripped up in front of the bride's chair, bowing until his forehead nearly touched his toes, and scraping his leg backward and kicking it up behind him, addressed to her the usual request :—

"Dance to you, if you plaze, Ma'am !"

Ellen looked at her husband, and he smiled and nodded. So Michael, to his proud delight, led her forth with great gallantry. But gallantry is not the term to use. To be sure, he expanded his mouth in the direction of his ears, to a most marvellous extent. The smile, however, expressed by the expansion was not one of unmistakable jollity, such

as he would have put on with another partner; this was a smile of gratified pleasure, but it was humble, deferential pleasure. He had donned his white, wedding gloves for the occasion, and he did not grasp the bride's hand in his as he would have grasped Mary's, but just held the tips of her gloved fingers resting on his. And he squared his elbow to such an acute angle that, in Mary's words, "'twas so sharp that he could push the eye out of one with it." And in this fashion Michael led his fair partner towards the musician.

"What tune will you plaze to have, Ma'am?" he asked. The bride declined to choose, so Michael very happily ordered "Haste to the wedding," for his inspiration.

"Well, well," said Mary, "'twould be a day's journey well-thravelled only to come and look at him. He danced the same 'Haste to the wedding' by himself in the hall most beautiful when he had no music but his own little *dhass*. But now, when Donnegan the Piper was there to lift it for him—

an' Donnegan isn't to be bet at the pipes—he went beyond the beyonds entirely!"

"And how did the bride dance, Mary?"

"Well—I'd say only middling to plaze my taste. She sailed about mighty handsome to be sure, soft an' aisy. Somehow, Sir, she put me in mind of a swallow, that doesn't clap the wing much, but that darts hither an' thither, an' turns which way it likes without any throuble to itself. But sure she hadn't the steps like Michael, an' you couldn't hear her footfall no more than if she was a sperrit."

None other but Michael asked the bride to dance. Michael, when consulted on the point, as master of the ceremonies, "and the masther's own fosther-brother," put an extinguisher on such freedom. There was no one there fit to dance with her but himself, except "the Curnel," and "the Curnel" was neither inclined to dance, nor could he, owing to his peculiarity of limb, were he ever so well inclined thereto.

The bridegroom danced, and danced frequently.

He entered into the spirit of the scene, buoyantly, as was his nature. His bride looked on with delight as his splendid figure flitted before her. Passing where she sat he more than once saluted her by gaily taking off his hat, and then her acknowledgment was joyous.

Nora Spruhan, the girl against whom Michael Hanrahan's threatening forefinger had been held up in the cottage hall, was present. A great metamorphose had taken place in Nora's appearance. She was showily, but, for her, becomingly attired, and there was about her a bold consciousness of beauty, a forwardness and self-possession of manner. No one could help admitting that her eyes of sparkling jet, her wavy raven hair, her rounded cheeks and rounded chin, her full and flexible lips, the roundness of her form, and the ease of her movements, gave her no slight claims to be called beautiful. But there was an effrontery—a self-assertion in her face and carriage, that rendered this beauty of person rather to be feared than loved.

But the bridegroom danced with Nora. As he did so there was a whisper and a murmur amongst the lookers-on, of which both became conscious, though on each its effect was different. When, very shortly, Richard O'Meara made his affectedly rustic bow, and would have retired, the girl refused to relinquish her partner; she kept him by the hand and whirled round him, until Michael Hanrahan, availing himself of the rustic custom, jumped forward to the rescue. Then Nora, flung disdainfully away from the fresh vis-à-vis, and dashed through the crowd into the cottage.

The bridegroom procured liquor for the assemblage at the bonfire, and it went round copiously. Not one of those present gulped down the beverage so provided with better will than the man yclept the "Colonel." His salutations to the young couple were frequent as his libations went on. By-and-by he was joined by two others of better grade than the general throng, and these three drank away right heartily.

The bride and bridegroom retired betimes amid the thorough good wishes of the assemblage at the bonfire.

And so ended the day of "the hauling-home" at the Cottage near the Cascades.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE MYSTERIOUS RESIDENT OF "THE TOWN OF THE CASCADES."

EARLY in this narrative, while looking up the river from the bridge, I directed attention to half a dozen or so of small "shabby-genteel" houses rising above the right bank of the river.

In three of these, the three nearest the bridge, dwelt three great cronies. In that immediately at hand lived the man from whose right limb, as it so far appears, proceeded the cannonading at the bonfire.

This strange person was not a native of "The Town of the Cascades," and the fixing of his abode there appeared to have been purely accidental. On an evening, three years prior to the

period of my narrative, he had arrived from the county-town as one of the passengers wedged together on the public car.

Every one who has journeyed on an Irish "public car" knows that from starting to pulling-up, the travellers are right good neighbours for the while; that the closer they are packed, the better neighbours they become, and that loud talk, loud laughter, mirth, and good fellowship make up the rule of the road. This being the case it was remarked as singular and unaccountable that the man I am now writing of did not once open his lips during the journey of more than twenty miles, except when he opened them to swallow liquor wherever it could be obtained.

When the car stopped at the "office" in the main street, the passengers, except the silent one, jumped down to scramble for their luggage, and depart for their several destinations. And when all had gone off, there he remained, still, without speaking. Exclusive of the beggars, who are numerous, and who have been often described by tourists,

there is always a knot of inquiring people assembled to scrutinize the arrivals on the public car, and sarcastic enough their remarks often are; generally, there is a policeman too, to look on quietly, and see that all is as it should be.

The scrutineers on the present occasion were deeply interested to discover why this silent man remained in his seat, without any apparent intention of moving. And the policeman considered he was bound to step forward and make inquisition. To the inquiries thereupon addressed to the silent man, no answer was returned, but he stared at the questioner with a stern and stupefied gaze. It was ascertained, however, that the object of curiosity had a wooden leg,—that he was very drunk,—but that though helpless from inebriation, his right arm was firmly twined round a good-sized portmanteau immediately behind him.

It would have been the manifest duty of the policeman to have taken this silent, staring man into his keeping. There could be no doubt that he was "a case." Drunken men are called "cases,"

but the exact analysis of the term I am not able to give. "Cases" of liquor, metaphorically considered, they may perhaps be.

It was evident to the lookers-on that if any amongst them were found as "far gone" as the man sitting on this car, such would be regarded as a "case" by the policeman, and dealt with accordingly. But, owing perhaps to a brotherly feeling, the majority having been "cases" themselves whenever practicable, the policeman's present conception of his duty was greatly approved of, and he received cordial aid in removing the silent, tipsy, wooden-legged man into the house of a certain "widow-woman" near at hand who kept accommodation for lodgers. The heavy portmanteau, a military cloak, and a stout blackthorn cudgel found clutched in his right hand, were accordingly all brought in and given in charge to the "widow-woman," together with the owner of these articles.

Such was the first appearance in "The Town of the Cascades" of the man now resident in the nearest of the shabby-genteel houses above the bridge.

After removing his wooden leg, which was expertly unstrapped by the policeman, the man was placed in bed, precautions being taken by the same official to seal up his portmanteau so that the contents could not be meddled with.

The next morning the silent man was delirious; and so he continued for more than a week. It was remarkable that nearly all his colloquies with the fanciful personages about his bed were carried on by signs, and that for ten days the only words he uttered were these,—"Ready, present, fire!"—enough to prove these three words were, that although chary of his speech he was not dumb. The doctor who attended him asserted that his illness was the result of intemperate habits, and I suppose the doctor was right.

After a lapse of ten days the patient's intellect returned. He beckoned the "widow-woman" who had been his nurse over to his bedside; he grasped her hand.

"Thanks—good—madam!" he said—"Honour and soul—not forget it—never!"

He rapidly recovered. When able to rise, the key of the iron-bound portmanteau was forthcoming: where it had previously been no one could tell. From the portmanteau he drew forth money, and paid freely and liberally all claims on him.

Whatever may have been his influencing motive, the silent man now fixed himself permanently in "The Town of the Cascades."

From the evening that the silent man had been consigned from the public car to the "widow-woman's" care, he had been an object of the most absorbing speculations to, I may safely say, every resident in my "Town of the Cascades."

"Who is he?"—"What is he?"—"What is his name?"—"Where did he come from?"—"What brought him here?" were questions in every one's mouth; questions with which neighbour plied neighbour, and questions that no neighbour could satisfactorily answer. There were surmises and suspicions innumerable, but nothing that could be relied on as conclusive.

The first day the silent man appeared in the

main street, he was closely and accurately examined from head to foot, to enable the observers to come to something like an accurate decision about him. It would seem that he was a tall man, and a robust man, with broad chest and shoulders; that at the right side of his body there was a wooden leg: —that in his right hand he carried a stout cudgel: —that as he went along he punched his wooden leg down in a resolute manner:—that at his left side was his own original left leg, and that this was of brawny proportion, and that he flung it before him with a sturdy step, and as if marching in military style.

It was further remarked that he held his head loftily, his broad chin pointing upwards. Also, physiognomists observed, that his teeth appeared to be riveted together, and that he stared hard at everything and everybody, from beneath heavy brows that nearly met together above his hooked nose.

Nor did his attire pass unnoticed. It was indubitably a blue military frock-coat that he wore,

buttoned up to his throat. No one but a military man could endure his black silk stock pulled so tight beneath his chin. And his blue trousers, with the red stripe down the outside seam, were military trousers, beyond a question. Indeed the only portion of dress about him *not* military was the high-crowned, broad-leafed, drab-coloured beaver hat that rose above his head. But even this could not neutralize the general air and costume of the man.

CHAPTER X.

THE "COLONEL'S" GRADE IS DETERMINED. THE THREE NEIGHBOURS.

Nick Mahaffy, the draper and silk-mercer and so forth, who as the stranger passed had stood at his door with his thumbs inserted into the armholes of his waistcoat, straddled halfway across the street to meet his opposite neighbour, Pat Dreelan, the grocer and spirit-dealer; and five or six others of less note, as "birds of a feather," joined these two.

He's an officer on the half-pay list,—you may depend upon it," gurgled out Nick Mahaffy. And he turned his bullet-head round, his chin revolving within his capacious cravat, and his prominent blue eyes rolling from face to face. Nick Mahaffy regarded himself as the principal man of the town,

and as such, he expected that "all he said should be gospel."

"To all appearance what you say is very likely, Mr. Mahaffy," modestly assented Pat Dreelan.

"I'm sure of it. I say it, and am sure of it."

Nick Mahaffy became dogmatical, and his face was flushed, as he challenged contradiction by frowning at each of the bystanders separately.

There was an acquiescing nod, or nod and shrewd wink, from all save Toby Purcell, the keeper of the "McMahon Arms" hotel. Toby was not a point-blank dissentient, but he had a jesting remark to make on all occasions.

"He's not an officer out and out at any rate," observed Toby, "for there is some of him wanting. He forgot his right leg behind him somewhere."

"I say he *is* an officer on the half-pay list," reiterated Nick Mahaffy in a passionate tone, his anger roused when he found his "gospel" questioned even in jest.

Luckily, at this instant, the person commented on, who had paused for a moment, gazing in the

direction of the church, which as I have said terminated the main street, wheeled suddenly and rapidly round. The knot of observers dispersed at once, with the exception of Nick Mahaffy, who recrossed the street slowly, his thumbs still in his waistcoat holes, neither his dignity or corpulence allowing of hasty movements.

It was not altogether on the dictum of Nick Mahaffy that a conclusion was arrived at. The general judgment led to the adoption of his opinion, namely, that the "silent man" was a half-pay officer.

Consultations were subsequently held to decide on his grade. At first the opinions were various. One thought he must be a captain, another would dub him major.

"By Jericho," said Toby Purcell, "you may as well for the honour and credit of the town, make him a general at once. 'Twon't cost you a halfpenny more."

Here again Nick Mahaffy came in with his dictum.

"I say it, and I'm sure of it, that he's a Curnel."

So a colonel's rank was awarded to the newcomer. He never on any occasion when so addressed repudiated the title, and it became his thenceforward.

There was a difference, however, in speaking to and speaking of this mysterious settler. There was some doubt as to the colonelcy; there was none as to the fact of his being on the half-pay list. So it came about that he was familiarly spoken of as "the Half-pay." And the Half-pay I shall in future term him.

Two very material questions were yet to be decided: "Where did he come from?" and "What was his name?"

He could not be traced one inch further than the county-town somewhat beyond twenty miles distant. He did not belong to the county-town, however. There was no doubt as to his country. He was not English or Scotch; he was not a "northern;" but there was no clue to guide inquiry as to which of the other three provinces of Ireland he had migrated

from. Then, as to his name. This proved a mystery too. He had not told his name to any one. The "widow-woman" could not give information. There was no address or label on his iron-bound portmanteau, nor had he left behind him on any occasion one line to enlighten people on this point. The widow-woman had asked his name. She imagined he was vexed with her for so questioning him, and he was too generous to be vexed by her. But in answer to her inquiry he had snapped open his jaws twice to say, "P.! W.!"

Now this intelligence was no way satisfactory. "P. W." could not be the Colonel's name. Toby Purcell's translations of "Paddy Whelan," or "Perry Winkle," or "Peery Walsh," were deemed more witty than wise.

But the stranger received letters at the post-office? Yes, he received one letter each quarter on a certain day. These letters, however, were addressed to "P. W." So the inquirers remained as much in the dark as ever. And our friend continued to be known by no other name, "*faute de meilleur*,"

than that of the Half-pay, or, in addressing him, that of Colonel.

The Half-pay, then, lived in the little "shabby-genteel" house on the right of the river, looking up from the bridge; and in that one nearest the bridge.

The next door neighbour to the Half-pay was Ned Culkin, the gauger of the district. Ned Culkin, as my friend Mary described him, was "a small round, lump of a man," who up to a certain hour every day, winter and summer, complained that "there was a shivering of cowld over him," and who, while this "shivering of cowld" lasted, was a blear-eyed, bilious-looking, tottering little creature. But when his peculiar affection passed off, he was changed, all at once, into as prancing, chattering, saucy fellow of his inches as you could meet.

To account for this every-day change in Ned Culkin,—to assign a cause why up to a certain hour he would "shiver with cowld," rub his eyes constantly, be sadly despondent, and tottering of gait, and then, that he should become so suddenly a very sparrow in pertness and movement, may appear

difficult. But the daily contrast in the same individual can be accounted for notwithstanding.

Every night that Ned Culkin the gauger lay down, he was brimful of caloric, "from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet." Every day this superabundance of caloric departed from the system; it was "given out," as I believe the scientific term is. During this "giving out" of his surcharge of caloric, Ned Culkin "shivered with cowld," Ned Culkin heaved sighs and was sad, Ned Culkin's very limbs shook under him. He was as useless as if he were a sensitive steam-engine without fire under the boiler. This state being irksome to excess, Ned Culkin was wont to get under weigh again by a fresh supply of caloric to replace what had been "given out;" and so the difficulty of explanation is surmounted. Need I say, in plain words, that Ned Culkin the gauger, the next door neighbour of the Half-pay, was a thorough-going, incorrigible toper?

The Colonel's next-door-but-one neighbour was Tom O'Loughlin. Tom was a scion of what is

called "a good family." He was but a younger son of a younger branch, yet he had inherited a moderate independence. While this lasted, Tom was a gay, dashing, *sans souci* blade. He rode steeple-chases; he betted like a fellow of spirit, taking any odds offered; he raked, and drank, and sported, without a single glance beyond the excitement of the hour, thus leading, as he himself recklessly expressed it in his favourite toast, "a short life and a merry one!"

All this ended as it needs must end. And now Tom O'Loughlin inhabited the most dilapidated of the shabby-genteel houses above the bridge; that immediately adjoining Ned Culkin's residence.

Tom O'Loughlin was avoided by every one, because he would fain beg or borrow of every one. He had none but chance resources left; such precarious aid as his plagued relatives bestowed on him. His attire was always old and ill assorted, made up of odds and ends of clothing flung to him. In person he was lean, and seemed diminutive from the crouching bend of his body. His head was sunk

between his shoulders; his hands were almost constantly passing through each other at his chest, not far below his chin. There was a self-depreciating meekness in his tone of voice as he spoke, and the wrinkles of his face had taken the expression of an insinuating grin. Even in his extreme poverty, the desire for indulgence had not left him, and he would ingratiate himself wherever his subserviency might lead to gratification. Tom O'Loughlin was known in the "Town of the Cascades" as "the decayed gentleman." And to the credit of the inhabitants be it recorded, that the poor wretch was regarded rather as an object of commiseration than of censure.

These three near neighbours,—the Half-pay, Ned Culkin the gauger, and Tom O'Loughlin, "the decayed gentleman," were three great cronies.

CHAPTER XI.

RICHARD O'MEARA'S CLIENT.

When introducing him to notice, I have said that Richard O'Meara was a splendid man. And so he was.

"If you met him walking down there," said Michael Hanrahan to me, pointing at the same time to the promenade opposite the little Bornoch hotel, "if you met him walking abroad there, you couldn't but take a liking to him. He didn't swagger and want to pass himself off as a grandee, like the Forneyaghs that's strutting so pompous there this moment. No here's the way he went—this way—"

And Michael held himself up, took the cane from

my hand, held it gingerly between his fingers, pointed his toes, extended his large lips to a pleasant simper, and slid along before me with all the grace of motion he could assume.

"You couldn't for the life of you pass him by," continued Michael, handing me back my cane, "without, I'd say, falling in love with him. And I never wondered at the poor misthress, God be good to her, to dote upon him, which she did to her dying day. He was a grand fellow entirely, and then he had such a pleasant smile, and such a pleasant word always, and he was such a hearty, good-natured fellow, besides all that, that you'd wish him all sorts of good luck every time you'd cross him."

Richard O'Meara was the son of one of those called "gentleman-farmers," a class not uncommon in Ireland. Old Mr. O'Meara was desirous that his favourite son should make his way in the world, and with this view he had educated him well, and had given him the profession of an attorney, or solicitor, whichever may be the proper term. Two years before he had brought his bride to the cottage

near the cascades he had begun to practise as the attorney of the district.

As the result of my inquiries, I have ascertained that owing to his personal endowments, his undoubted capacity, and his known high principles, he began the world with every fair prospect before him. Yet, up to the period of his marriage, Richard O'Meara had gained but little permanent standing in his business. He was too gay a fellow for the drudgery of the desk or for steady application. From personal liking, people wished to employ him, but they paused before intrusting their serious concerns to his care. It was not at the race-course or other place of public amusement, that law-papers could be put in training; nor did his nocturnal orgies prepare his head for the routine labour of his office.

Occasionally in matters of importance, particularly where display was to be made, Richard O'Meara would apply himself to become master of a particular case, and at the sessions-court, or other local tribunal, he would exhibit first-rate ability, and

so gain high applause. And he was popularly regarded as a first-rate advocate.

There was a degree of Quixotism very rare in the profession often guiding our young solicitor in his practice. Whenever the great oppressed the humble, whenever the rich was against the poor, Richard O'Meara was found to be at the weaker side. And on such occasions he brought to bear a resolution, an energy, and a talent that showed what he was made of when he wished to work. It would appear that the less his client had it in his power to recompense him, the more ardent and enthusiastic was he. This tendency of his did not certainly evince great worldly prudence, and sunk him very low in the estimation of his brethren of the sessions-court, as being unprofessional in every sense.

Different persons attributed different motives to Richard O'Meara. Some said that his frequent advocacy of the poor arose from the generosity of his nature, which rose up in combat against whatever had the appearance of oppression. This was Michael Hanrahan's opinion. But this judgment

was repudiated by others who insisted there could not be such a quality as generosity found in combination with an attorney's nature; that even if such a weakness had originally existed, it must have been pulled up, root and branch, during the term of apprenticeship. So another cause was assigned for Richard O'Meara's singular propensity. It was said that he had been slighted by the "gentry" in his endeavours to keep pace with them, and that he "had a sting in for them."

Richard O'Meara's proceedings, whatever their motive may have been, had procured for him the title of "the poor man's attorney."

In a neighbouring county lived at this time an orphan girl. Her father had been long dead, her mother more recently, and she was, though well-descended on both sides, in extreme poverty. It was said that a considerable dowry was withheld from her by a relative living far away, and that through some legal quibble. The poor girl had not means to assert her rights. Richard O'Meara be-

came accidentally acquainted with her; she was very beautiful and winning, and he soon loved her.

He may have been the poor man's advocate from generous impulse, according to Michael Hanrahan and others kindlily disposed towards him, or to satisfy a waspish nature by bestowing his sting here and there, as was on the other hand asserted. But *here* love was the motive-power. And love is a wonderful propeller.

He gained the orphan's suit, and in an instant, I may say, she was rich—comparatively rich.

While acting for this client, the intercourse between them was necessarily constant. Gratitude was in the girl's heart; gratitude and love are of close kindred; gratitude is often, as in the present instance, no more than a purveyor to love. The transfer from the one to the other is quickly and readily perfected. There is no need for documentary interference, or for legal technicality, or legal tardiness. And the orphan loved the talented, and thoughtful, and assiduous, and successful, and hand-

some young solicitor to whom she owed the recovery of her dower.

"Dear Mr. O'Meara," said Ellen McMahon, with tears in her soft eyes, "I can never—never thank you. But I am indeed grateful, deeply grateful."

She impulsively extended her hand to the person she addressed, and raised her tearful eyes to his. But those eyes, consequent on something they met in his, fell instantly, and love, as he often does, coloured her face deep crimson. And then, by another fantastic proceeding not unusual to him, he took away every drop of blood from her face, and set poor gentle Ellen trembling. She thought she ought to withdraw her hand, for very sensibly she felt that the young solicitor pressed it fervently. But here again love took it upon him to act arbitrarily. He seized her arm, and held it outstretched, while the hand remained where she placed it.

"*I* am not deeply grateful, Miss McMahon," answered her solicitor. And his rich, full voice was without one sharp, business-like intonation to qualify its mellow touch of "brogue."

"*I* am not grateful," he repeated, "and I have no reason to be grateful."

The client's eyes looked up again to inquire the meaning of these words, but they fell even more promptly than before.

"You do not understand my meaning, I see. But listen. I have done you a trifling good, not worthy of your deep gratitude however. In return, how have you acted? You have made me your captive for life—is this a fit return for even so slender a service as I have rendered you? Why then should I be grateful?"

The speaker felt the little hand quiver in his grasp. But was that a smile the solicitor in a new cause saw curving Ellen's lips?

"Mr. O'Meara," she softly began. And then she paused, and paused, courage failing her to proceed.

"I await your plea, my fair client," said the solicitor. Still no answer, until the silence became embarrassing.

"Miss McMahon," at length the solicitor said, "I

will quit all light allusion to the subject I have lightly commenced. Be seated for a moment, and hear me."

He gently placed her in a seat, and took another beside her. He did not part with the passive little hand however. It would have been manifestly unprofessional to do so;—"Possession is nine points of the law," you know.

"Even before your suit commenced I loved you; perhaps my ardency in your cause was owing to this. But I forbore awhile to urge my affection because it might appear as though I were seeking to make my advocacy conditional with you. I came to the resolve that when I had succeeded, as I was determined to do, I would depart, and try to live down a love that might seem interested and mercenary. But this resolution I cannot keep. Before Heaven I declare that had you remained poor, had my exertions in your cause been unsuccessful, I would have sought your love as the most precious thing on earth. Ellen, will you, with full confidence in my motives, bestow it on me now?"

What said the little hand, and what the tremulous lips, and timid eyes, I need not expatiate upon. Was it not Ellen McMahon we have seen brought as Richard O'Meara's bride to the Cottage of the Cascades?

CHAPTER XII.

HISTORY OF THE WONDERFUL LEG. THE LILIPUTIAN ARMY.

Almost immediately following the establishment of the Half-pay in my "Town of the Cascades," he was universally known, and, as I learned, the object of universal good will.

"Michael told me," said Mary Hanrahan, "that down to the dogs an' cats, an' the cocks an' hens, an' the ducks an' geese,—all had a regard for the poor Half-pay. The sparrows themselves made freer with him than with anybody else. Ay, an' I heerd farther than that same: I heerd that if he held up his wooden leg they'd hop on it when they came to pick up the crumbs he'd give them. But

that last was a fable, I'm sure. Michael didn't give credit to it, an' neither did I——"

Between one and two in the afternoon of each day the Half-pay was seen descending the uneven way from his little shabby-genteel residence, delving the wooden leg into the crumbling surface to secure himself against accidents. Then he proceeded to the bridge, whereon he took up his position.

"He was never earlier," said Mary Hanrahan, "than between one and two o'clock. 'Early to bed an' early to rise,' you know; and becoorse, late to bed is late to rise. An' if 'the early bird catches the worms,' the Half-pay didn't catch a worm while he was amongst us. Ned Culkin the gauger, an' Tom O'Loughlin the decayed gentleman, an' himself, used to sit over their tumbler till all hours—that was all the harm in the poor man. Be the same token there was a name for Ned Culkin the gauger besides his own. People used to call him '*Seldom Sober*.'"

When the Half-pay reached the bridge after "his night over his tumbler," he generally looked down

earnestly, as if to make sure that the cascades were tumbling with their usual vigour, and that nothing was wrong with them. Then he gazed at both banks, and then as far as he could carry his eyes down the water. He was usually provided with a few pebbles to shy at any trout that happened to break the surface below him ; it was not recorded, however, that he had succeeded in hitting a single fish. When the Half-pay's duty was so far discharged, he would wheel round, and placing his back to the parapet of the bridge, he would scrutinize the passengers as intently as if he were a detective on duty.

If a well-looking girleen tripped by, he placed the forefinger of his left hand in contact with the peak of his beaver, and screwed his left eye into a hard wink. If a female of respectable class passed him, he placed the edge of his open left hand above the peak, and did not wink. If one of still better grade came, he raised his beaver, and with a rapid twist of his right wrist, brought his cudgel to a present arms. In return the Half-pay received merry smiles, familiar

nods, and gracious bows,—as the case might be, and suitable to the person acknowledging his salute. With some of his own sex he shook hands; with others he was more distant in his greetings; few went by, however, without some mark of recognition on his part.

When verbally saluted with "Good morrow and good luck to you, Colonel," or some such accost, he returned a verbal answer—a very concise one, however. The "Good morning to you kindly, So-and-So," which another man would have used he had contracted to a monosyllable once or twice repeated, according to his appreciation of the person. It was either "Maw," or "Maw—maw—maw."

Nor did the Half-pay confine his notice to the grown-up passengers on the bridge. Not one child scampered by him that he did not tap on the head with his cudgel, not so hard as to hurt him, but quite hard enough to make him pause in his race and look back at him in astonishment. At first he puzzled them, one and all. As they opened their eyes, and stared at him in wonder, to ascertain

whether he was friend or foe, the assailant, with erect neck and closely-clasped teeth, would be observed straining his eyes after some far-off object up the water, and beckoning as if to some one at a distance.

This clever deception was not however of long continuance. Little heads were laid together, spies were set; very shortly the Half-pay was convicted, on undeniable testimony, of being the assailant of the juvenile discoverers. And with childish acuteness it was understood that the taps were given in play only. As soon as this conclusion was arrived at, war was declared, and plans were devised for carrying on hostilities. Keeping beyond the reach of the cudgel, forces were mustered, defiance was proclaimed. The stoutest and nimblest of the urchins were detached, to creep cautiously and pluck the enemy by the skirts, the successful onslaught to be followed by an immediate retreat to the shouting comrades who shared the glory of the enterprise. Following such assaults, the Half-pay would bounce and whirl his cudgel, as Orlando

Furioso would have done. So bold did the assailants become that one daring little fellow, armed with as heavy a bludgeon as he could wield, stole, Indian-like, on the apparently unwatchful foe, and inflicted a terrible bang on—the wooden leg. The Half-pay immediately stooped, and chafed the member, and moaned, as it were, with pain, and fiercely brandished his weapon, and looked as if he were a Gulliver, ready and willing to swallow the entire throng of screaming, prancing Liliputians.

Except they were altogether new-comers, the Half-pay could not henceforth get one head within reach of his blackthorn; he could not make one prisoner to retain as hostage; he could stump fast enough to the assault; in a hand-to-hand struggle he must have been the victor. But this proved to be a guerilla campaign against a regular army. The enemy retreated instantly on his approach, to renew the attack when opportunity offered.

Thus beset, unable to bring the foe to close quarters, the Half-pay hit upon a piece of generalship worthy of him. Amongst a collection of old iron

offered for sale he discovered a rusty blunderbuss-barrel. He got part of his wooden leg sawn off, and the blunderbuss-barrel substituted. The original touch-hole at the side being plugged up, another was bored uppermost instead. A wooden plug was fitted to the muzzle to be inserted and withdrawn at pleasure. And the leg being thus rendered composite, part wood, part iron, the owner issued from the smith's forge in Bow-lane accoutred for combat.

The first discharge of this piece of ordnance (loaded with powder only) scattered the guerillas in every direction, and at length a prisoner was captured. The little rascal, so brave before, squalled within the grip of the remorseless captor. He was led in durance to an apple-stall at the foot of the bridge, and every available opening in his uniform was stuffed with rosy fruit. Thus disgraced he was suffered to prance away, as nimbly as his freight allowed him to progress.

The very next battle the conquering Half-pay had as many prisoners in his keeping as he could take

charge of. Ultimately he was forced to confine his captures to one enemy each engagement—so expensive was it to provision them for their subsequent march.

Not only did this general defeat his enemies, but, following the example of the ancient Romans, he took them into his alliance to a certain extent. For his former foes sought it as a desirable privilege to be allowed to fire off the composite leg that had created such consternation at the outset. And expert gunners some of them became, as was shown in my description of the cannonading at the bonfire.

I should add that no matter whether the Half-pay winked at the pretty girls, or saluted others according to station; or shook hands with some men, or said "Maw!" to more;—while he stood on the bridge, or stumped through the streets; whether he fought battles, gained victories, or captured prisoners, the Half-pay spoke little, and never laughed. Nevertheless, it was shrewdly guessed that between his lips and hard-closed teeth a good deal of silent laughter went on; that he internally laughed at his

urchin foes, and internally laughed with high relish at the impenetrable mystery in which he had contrived to envelop himself — impenetrable to the keenest scrutiny of the dwellers in my "Town of the Cascades."

CHAPTER XIII.

FAIR ELLEN, HER THREE KNIGHTS, AND HER ATTENDANT MAIDEN.

When Richard O'Meara said to his Ellen that he would have wooed her in poverty, for the treasure of herself, he but spoke his real sentiments. He was not one to utter falsehoods, even to a girl, as many "honourable" fellows will think it very fine to do.

That his love for Ellen McMahon was real and sincere, there is no question. Constitutionally ardent and impetuous, his affection for her was as warm and deep as such a nature could bring forth.

He was a disinterested fellow, too, incapable of taking a mean advantage of any one. And that

his love for Ellen was nowise mercenary, he fully proved, even to the most suspicious. Previous to the marriage ceremony, the bride's dowry, which I may say he had bestowed upon her, he secured to herself, every penny of it, sure and fast. This might be about three thousand pounds in funded property; and the income thence accruing was payable to her alone.

Ellen McMahon was all heart, but there was no self-reliance in her character, no self-assertion, no self-sustainment. Her every look was an appeal for aid and protection. From all I could learn, the faultless, manly person of Richard O'Meara had fascinated her eye; his generosity and services had given him her love.

Another in Ellen's position would have felt there were certain unpleasantnesses to be borne as Richard O'Meara's wife.

Previous to his marriage, Richard O'Meara the attorney ambitioned, as I have hinted, to keep pace with men of station and fortune who were his chance companions at the race-course or other places

of public amusement. But he found that although he and such high folk were on good terms generally, he received no encouragement as a visitor at their houses, or in their family circles. Just the contrary. Prudent *pères de famille*, or more prudent mothers, would not place so fine a young fellow on a footing of dangerous intimacy with their daughters. Hence the "sting" which it was supposed he kept in reserve for aristocratic suitors in the local courts. Persons of the middling class resented the attorney's assumption of superiority. With these he had no footing; neither did he seek it.

For these reasons Ellen O'Meara, when she had taken possession of her Cottage of the Cascades, had no female companions. There were no bridal visitings, no bridal entertainments, no bridal fuss or pleasant bustle. But Ellen O'Meara did not feel this isolation a privation. It was her nature to shrink from the glaring sunshine, and to bloom sweetest in the shade. Her husband's sustaining love was sufficient for Ellen O'Meara. With his arm to lean on, with his smile to greet her, and his

jocund humour to elicit her silvery laughter, she did not pine for foreign associations.

Besides, Ellen could command the services of three knights as devoted as knights could be, and of one attendant maiden, whose fidelity and attachment were not to be surpassed.

The first of these faithful knights was Michael Hanrahan. Second to Michael Hanrahan I will place the mastiff, Teague. Third in order was our friend the Half-pay, who was a knight after a chivalry of his own. And the devoted maiden was Mary Malone, the chief narrator of the circumstances I am relating.

So that, although without visitors, and leaving the all-engrossing attachment between husband and wife out of the question, Ellen did not regard her life as a solitary one. The three knights I have named and the one attendant maiden were influenced in their devotion to her by her beauty, by her dove-like gentleness, and very probably by her timid dependence. And the knights were quite ready to encounter giants, dragons, ogres, or any

other odds, as was the maiden to suffer, for her behoof.

It is an enticing day. The sun is smiling down upon the river, and the river, as it dimples onward, smiles in return up to the sun. The sun's rays are refracted into the prismatic colours in their passage through the medium of the waterfalls. The winged breeze is gamboling through the foliage, and chequers the green sod with dancing light and shadow. It is a day to enjoy a refreshing saunter: one is urged to it just as the linnet that has been constructing its nest in the garden-hedge is impelled to vault upward and downward, and to flutter joyously in ether.

Ellen O'Meara stood on the threshold of her cottage, and looked abroad. The breeze, as it flew by, kissed her cheeks and forehead, and fondled with her auburn curls. The dog Teague was seated without: anon he looked full into the face of his lady; then he turned his eyes upward, as if

scanning the firmament; then he capered a sedate caper, looked over the right shoulder, and over the left, sat him down again, and fixed his full gaze on the object of his devotion. The dog's meaning was manifest: "Let us fetch a walk by the water-side, fair mistress: it will be very pleasant. And, my word for it, we shall have no rain to-day."

At this juncture, Michael Hanrahan entered the garden by the green wicket at the right-hand side. Michael was bareheaded, and he was, as Mary expressed it, "humming a *dhass*." As soon as he observed the lithe form standing beneath the festooned porch, he wheeled sharp round; with both his palms he smoothed his front, gave the locks at his temples a twist round his finger, scraped his large whiskers forward after the manner of a rabbit dusting the sand from its jaws, and then he wheeled round again, his expansive lips dressed in their broadest simper.

Michael stepping gingerly along, approached his "posy."

"Ma'am," he said, bowing to her, "I'm afther discoorsing Master Dick round at the office. As

busy as a bee in a paddock he is—and more of that to him is my prayer. He can't leave the job he's at, Ma'am, and he sent his compliments and his love by me, Ma'am. And, Michael," says he, "tell the posy—"

"The *what*, Michael?"

"Ha, ha! That was a slip of the tongue, Ma'am. 'Tis so often on my lips that they're used to it. It's only the name we have for you, Ma'am, Mary and myself. And sure you are the posy of our garden —the posy of posies! But you won't be displeased, Ma'am, against us for calling you so?"

"Who would be displeased, Michael, at being called by such a pretty name?"

"Well, but it wasn't the posy Masther Dick called you, Ma'am. 'Michael,' says he, 'tell Mrs. O'Meara from me to go take a walk by the river-side. And let you and honest Teague walk before her, Michael,' he says in his pleasant way, 'and don't let Saint Pether if you meet him look cross at her. And let Mary Malone walk out too,' says Masther Dick, ''tis a fine day for it, Michael, and

there will be health in it for ye all. So be off as fast as ye can,' says he to myself."

"I was thinking of a stroll myself, Michael," answered the posy, "and since Mr. O'Meara wishes it, we had better set off as he desires us."

Michael was on the alert instantly. Mary was summoned to attend her mistress, and very shortly they were ready to set out. Michael furnished himself with a long staff, his pony, as he called it, too long to be leant on, and which he grasped after the fashion of our grandmothers, now, they tell me, creeping in amongst their modish great-granddaughters. He and Teague took the front rank, "the posy" following, Mary a step behind. Michael stepped out with the air of a herald, and after a gambol or two Teague fell into his staid, business trot.

"Michael marched along as proud as a paycock," said Mary to me, "an' if you saw the care he took of us, you'd be plaised at it. 'Not too near the water there, Ma'am,' he'd say; 'the bank is slippery.' 'A little damp just there, Ma'am,' he'd

say; 'step over it.' An' he'd dhraw a criss-cross with his wattle to mark where the damp was on the path. If the bough of a tree hung low, he'd pull it to one side, an' with a nice bow, like any gentleman, he'd keep it out of the way until we'd pass by. An' when our posy would say, as soft as a turtle-dove, 'Thank you, thank you, Michael,' my poor Michael would lean his two hands upon his wattle—that he'd put slanting,—an' he'd kick up his two heels behind, as high as his head (I couldn't show you how he done that, you know), an' away before us he'd scamper like a buck, to keep hurt or harm out of our way. If a flower was growing up on a bank, or down in a hollow, an' that he thought it purty to look at, up he went like a mad cat, or down he darted like a weazel, to pluck it for our posy. An' if you'd seen how handsome he'd make his offering, indeed an' indeed you'd have a liking for him, though you were his enemy!

"An' the poor Teague," continued Mary, her face lighting up brilliantly as her memory reflected back past sunshine, "*that* was a dog with more

knowledge than many a Christian I knew in my time. If you saw how he watched Michael cutting his capers, an' if you heard him saying, 'Wow—wow—wow,' without barking at all, you'd undherstand him to mean quite plain, 'Well done, Michael, my boy!' Ay, an' the honest dog must give pleasure to the posy too, his ownself. He'd bring his bit of stick an' he'd lay it down at her feet, an' he'd cut a curry-whibble round, an' look at the wather. An' we'd all know he was saying without words; 'I can swim aqual to any duck, wouldn't you like to see me at it?' Then the posy would pitch the stick about half a yard or so; she couldn't pitch it farther, the crature—an' you'd almost laugh to see the great job she made of that same. Then 'twas mighty pleasant to hear the pullaloo of joy coming from the dog, an' in he'd toss himself from the high bank, an' come back to lay his bit of stick down at the posy's feet again, looking as proud as a lord, the poor fellow. An' indeed you'd wondher to look at him when we met a sthranger coming the way. Teague would march before us an' keep his eye close on the watch until

the person passed a good piece off,—as much as to say, 'Don't touch our posy for your life!' Poor Teague!—poor Teague!

"An' then there was the Half-pay too. Far we didn't go on our way until there was a loud shot, that made the posy an' myself cry out an' jump a-one-side. 'Tis the Half-pay,' says Michael, lookin' back at us. Michael had managed, as I found out afterwards, to put up the Half-pay to the knowledge that we were to go a-walking, an' of the way we were to go. An' sure enough, the very next turn we came to, there was the Half-pay. You'd think there was a rod of iron down through his neck, an' into his back-bone, he stood up so sthraight. An' if you didn't know him, you'd suppose he was ready to bite you, he looked so glum, an' stared so wicked. While we passed him he took off his hat an' held it up high, an' he stuck his stick out before him. Our posy bowed her head to him very handsome to see, an' says she, 'Good day to you, Curnel.' An' the Half-pay made answer in a way of his own:—'Maw—maw—Ma—dame!' he says to her. Curious

enough it happened—six times at the least, before we came to the end of our walk, the Half-pay met us, every time we met him he was standing as stiff as before, every time his hat off an' his stick out before him, an' every time what he said was 'Maw—maw —Ma—dame!' With only one leg, as I may say, to his body, he circumvented us some way, although we had two good legs apiece undher us, an' Teague, had four to his own share. Wasn't it curious, Sir?" asked Mary, smiling her arch smile.

"Was the Colonel in love with your 'posy,' Mary?"

"Not very far from it, in my honest judgment, Sir," answered Mary. "An' then, my dear," she went on, "when we were coming back, who should we see running to meet us but Masther Dick his ownself. Did you ever see a young horse prancing through a pasture, frolicking along with his head up, and his mane straming, an' his eyes flaming an' dancing in his head? Well he put me in mind of the young horse as he came towards us, an' 'twould delight your very heart to see our posy springing

like a young deer to meet him. An' then they went arm-in-arm together, like a happy couple, as they were."

"What became of you then, Mary?"

"Why, Sir, I fell into the rear rank, as the sodgers say—alongside of my poor Michael an' his wattle."

"Much against your will, to be sure, Mary."

"No, indeed, honey—with a heart an' a half, to tell you the honest thruth.

"Oh!" said Mary, "this was one day out of many happy days, when sunshine was around us in the darkest weather. 'Twas a sorrowful thing the sunshine wasn't to last."

And Mary's smile was one of sad retrospection.

CHAPTER XIV.

MICHAEL AND HIS FOSTER-BROTHER.

MICHAEL HANRAHAN'S attachment to Richard O'Meara was uncompromising, ardent, and unselfish. Michael was not a servant, properly so called, and yet, without making any terms, he had taken upon him all the duties, and more than the duties, of a servant; no *quid pro quo* obligations on either side.

This to some may appear strange, and will doubtless make Michael's pretension to worldly wisdom problematical. I do not think Michael could boast the possession of an overstock of "*la sagesse du monde*" the day he "kicked up his heels" while attending his "posy," as described by Mary in the last Chapter. Nor do I think that up to this

hour he can be said to carry a sufficient ballast of good sense, taking the term "good sense" as it is commonly understood,—a due foresight of one's own interests before the interests of any one else, and a due preference of the same. For all that it is my judgment that a counterpart of honest Michael would be worth to any of my friends, good wages, good board, good lodging, good clothing, kind treatment, and full trust and esteem.

In his natural disposition he was affectionate and cheerful; in presence of piper or fiddler he was hilarious. From culture he was virtuous and eschewed evil, yet his ethics were shallow. His well was not, so to speak, deep, and yet I assert that he was nearer the truth than if a plummet were required to sound it. It is a question with me if the astute philosopher who can measure the divine precept by the law of nature, and who can hold a balance, as it were, in which to weigh the questions of right or wrong to a nicety, be as good a man. Michael accepted the divine law without poising it on his palm, satisfied with the impress of the coin.

Pray excuse this dissertation on Michael Hanrahan. When I meet such a one, I think the more of our common humanity.

To say nothing, however, of Michael's inherent propensity, there was other good reason why he should exemplify his disposition in a particular way towards Richard O'Meara. Was he not, as I have said, Richard O'Meara's foster-brother?—a tie of so many strands in Ireland, that legal two-edged swords, yclept Acts of Parliament, were found insufficient in the olden time to sever it. Richard O'Meara and Michael Hanrahan had grown up together, and now, at the time I write of, Michael was installed at the cottage, as a mere matter-of-course, acting as major-domo, friend, and servant.

Michael Hanrahan it was who had superintended the preparations for the reception of the bride. Michael it was who had, with one exception, regulated the household. Michael it was who had engaged Mary Malone as the special attendant of the new mistress.

"Do you think, Mary," I inquired, "that he

was altogether disinterested in his selection of you?"

"Disinterested? I don't exactly know the meaning of that word, Sir."

"Well, I mean that perhaps his choice was made as much out of liking for yourself, as from his certainty of your fitness for the post."

"Ah! now I have you, Sir!—You think he pitched on me because he'd rather see me every day than be waiting for Sunday to come about?"

"My very meaning, Mary."

"An' upon my word an' credit, you were never more right in your life, Sir. Ah! I see you're a man that has gumption, an' when you were young—if it's not making over free to say so—you used to coort a bit too, I'll be bound."

"Everybody 'coorts a bit,' as you call it, Mary."

"An' some too much," said Mary, with her pleasant laugh.

That Michael Hanrahan was filled with admiration of his posy is certain—just such admiration, I take it, as was expressed towards Marie Antoinette

of France by his countryman Burke, in the British Parliament. But exclusive of his devotion to her beauty, and her gentle dependent nature, Michael's attachment was even of a higher character. He looked upon the young wife as the instrument, to use his own expression, "in the hands of God," for the reclamation of the young man he loved, from the destructive career he had led even up to the period of his marriage.

"He was rushing headlong to owld Nick, God bless the hearers," was Michael's pithy conclusion to a rather lengthy statement of Richard O'Meara's doings.

"An' I was certain," he added, "as that I walked above ground, he could never find it in his heart to give pain to the crature he loved so well. An' sure the love of a king, with a crown on his head an' a sceptre in his hand, wouldn't be one bit more than was her due!"

"My heart used to bleed to see him," said Michael another time, "an' for all that, although he disthressed me beyond measure, I couldn't quarrel

with him, an' I should stick to him somehow, whatever road he thravelled. I'll tell you one or two things now that happened them times—that is, before he was married."

I should perhaps remark here that occasionally Michael was the narrator of events, but more generally Mary told me her story in the cliff "cobbey-house."

"One night," said Michael, "one night out of the night afther night that he went on the batther, the poor fool, the cock was crowing for the dawn when he made his way home. To be sure he remained in bed until far in the day, and people were calling and calling about their law business, and no sign of my gentleman in his office. I think the less rubbing you have to an attorney the less holes will be in your jacket. But above all, if you *have* the misfortune to get into the clutches of one of 'em, let an acre or two be between you and a 'turney that dhrinks or you'll have cause to repent. A hundhred chances to one but he'll put the wrong end before, or tangle your skein in such a way that

a score judges with their wigs on couldn't unravel it, and you'll be left in the lurch."

"Indeed, Michael, the wisest way is to keep wide of the meshes of the law."

"That's as thrue a saying as ever came from Solomon. Well, to go on with my story. My fosther-brother, Masther Dick the 'turney, had *his* net full of fools this time, and they were calling, and calling, and calling. I think I towld as many lies that morning, heaven forgive me, as if I was bred up to be an attorney myself,—and 'tis their thrade, you know. I was ready to cry down tears when I listened to the people complaining, and abusing, and scolding. 'Twould make a Turk sorrowful, to think that the handsome tip-top young man—ay tip-top in every way—should be ruining himself as he was. In the height of my throuble a thought came into my head. I crept up the stairs very aisy, and I opened my lad's door as quietly as if I was a first-rate thief. 'Twas between one and two o'clock in the day then, and he was sleeping as sound as if his eyelids were stitched together. I stole in on my

tippy-toes, I made one bould grab, and off I scudded with every tack of the bed-clothes. I dropped them on the lobby a good distance from the room-door, and down stairs I scampered in hot haste to get out of harm's way. Then I peeped up through the bannisters to see what would come of it. As sure as I'm telling it to you, out comes my gentleman blinking like an owl in the sunshine, and he takes up the bed-clothes again and carries them back with him, hugged tight in his arms, as if he was mighty fond of 'em.

"Well, my dear, when I thought he was fast again, I crept up stairs the second time. The rogue didn't latch his door, thinking to entrap me —'twas only closed, and I pushed it little by little until I got my head inside. There he was, stretched to his full length, and the clothes tucked round him as snug as a thrush in his nest. You'd swear he was as hard asleep as before, but I seen the uppermost eye give a couple of twinkles. 'Ha, ha! that's a fox's sleep, my lad,' says I to myself, and by the luck of the world I seen the nose of the

boot-jack just peeping out from the blankets, an' then I seen the same boot-jack stealing up half an inch at a time. Away with myself as fast as the legs could carry me; an' well for me I did, for the head was only just at the wrong side of the door when whack comes the boot-jack with the sound of a cannon-ball, an' 'twas sent with a good aim to the very spot where the head was only half a second of time before. I don't think I'd be here to day clearing this tumbler and telling my story if I wasn't so quick."

"Rather a serious retaliation that for well-meant interference, Michael."

"When he made his appearance down stairs more than an hour afther, he said to me, in his own pleasant, smiling way, 'I didn't intend to pelt at you, Michael, only to frighten the seven senses out of you.' But I didn't give credit to him. By my word 'tisn't all out safe to depend on a half-tipsy man at any time; he'd give a brain-blow, maybe, an' call it a joke. But I couldn't fall out with the poor fellow at all somehow.

"But I gave him a bit of my mind that day;" —Michael laid down the tumbler he was rubbing at, and he stood full in front of me. He stretched out his right arm, and protruded his right leg, assuming an oratorical attitude; and there was earnestness, I would even say impressiveness, in his look.

"I says to him as this: 'Masther Dick,' says I, 'I'm dead ashamed of you, and I'm grieved for you—'

"'More fool you, my good Michael,' he made answer. 'Kick the shame and the grief away from you,' he said, 'they're very grum comrades to thravel with.'

"'The road *you*'re thravelling,' I said, taking up his word, 'won't bring you to luck or grace, or earn for you a good name.'

"'For the matter of that, Michael,' he said to me, 'the name I have is a very good one. Richard O'Meara is my name; I'm come of a good ould stock, as you know, an' I don't desire a betther name than my own.'

"'You'll disgrace it, Masther Dick,' was my answer, 'if you don't turn yourself to another coorse. Mind my warning, Masther Dick; if you follow on;—on, on, on you'll go, until you'll sink deep into the black bog that you can't escape from if you were to kick the legs from your body thrying to get loose.'

"'Michael Hanrahan,' he says, 'I did not expect you would condemn your fosther-brother to be smothered in a bog-hole.'

"'I would save you, Masther Dick, if I had the power. You are as well brought up a young man as walks on Ireland's ground; you're fit to go shouldher to shouldher with any lord if you'd mind yourself. But 'tis "welcome thrumpery, for want of company" with you. There's your business gone to ould Nick—'

"'No wondher, Mick. That same gentleman always has a finger in the pie that's prepared in an attorney's office—'

"'The money would be as plenty with you as the corn on the barn flure—'

"'Ay, when I had thrashed it out of my clients,' the rogue said.

"'You don't want the sense,' I answered to him, 'but you smother it with the liquor, and won't give it fair play. Masther Dick, Masther Dick, it's time for you to look about you, I can tell you!'

"'I can do that at all events, Michael, whatever comes of it.' And he turned his head round about, and round about, and looked in every direction. 'I can follow your advice in that, at all events, Michael,' he said.

"That was the way with him ever, an' always turning my words into a joke, an' still dhrinking, dhrinking. Whatever I could say or do had no effect.

"I'll tell you what happened another day," continued Michael, resuming the occupation he had for a time laid aside.

"There was little money in the house, and where could it come from when there was no earning?—all going out, an' nothing coming in! 'There's no use in your expecting breakfast here,' I said to

Masther Dick, about three o'clock in the day, when he walked down stairs to me. 'No tay in the taypot,' says I, 'an nothing to buy it with, an' there's no bread or anything.' I turned the taypot upside down to prove to him 'twas empty. Matthers weren't so bad all out, to be sure, but it came into my mind 'twas a good way to tell him what I thought of his doings. He put on as solemn a face as if he was saying his prayers, though he was humbugging all the while.

"'Here, Michael, my honest friend, take this,' he says, an' he hands me a sixpence. 'Lay it out carefully,' he says; 'purchase one pennyworth of buttermilk in the market, this we'll divide between us, share an' share alike. Then provide two penny buns, to munch with the buttermilk, an' you an' I will breakfast gloriously. The change, threepence, will provide for to-morrow.' He took me by the arm, an' looked like a Solomon. 'The docthors say, Michael,' he says, 'that the tay is a wishy-washy thing, an' buttermilk they praise to the skies for being wholesome. By breakfasting on butter-

milk and penny buns, we'll cut our coats according to our cloth, an' we'll be healthful into the bargain.'

"Another time I came to him, 'Masther Dick,' says I, 'look at the way I am.' An' I showed him my coat all in babby-rags. 'We'll soon be without a stitch to cover us, an' afther a while we can't so much as show ourselves at mass, without disgracing ourselves. Body and soul we're doomed to suffer by the way you're going on.'

"'Upon my honour,' he says, looking at me as if he was sorry at the heart's core, 'upon my honour, my poor honest Michael, you're like a plucked goose, surely. But I'll soon provide for you, and clothe you well. I'll make you turn out like a cock afther moulting. Hould here,' he says, an' he grips me by the collar before I could be on my guard of him; no more than the man in the moon could I guess what he was about. I struggled hard to get loose, but I might as well expect to get from the jaws of a vice, he held me so tight. In no time my tattered coat was flying about in bits an' scraps, and while you could count six, his own long-tailed

coat was on my back, my arms aching from the mauling he gave me.

"'Now Michael Hanrahan,' says he, 'you're fit to go to mass, an' to go a coorting afther mass is over, if you're in the humour.' And he gave me a slap between the shouldhers. I looked behind me, an' there was the tail of the coat scraping the ground a good distance in the rear of me. I felt the collar touching my poll up near the top of my head, and the cuffs were a mile or so beyond the ends of my fingers. If the world was lost at the moment I couldn't help roaring out laughing to see the show he made of me. "What are you laughing at, Michael?' he says, 'you're an out-an-out-dandy, I can tell you—such a dandy as you wouldn't see in the city of Dublin itself.' 'Faith 'tis you I believe,' says I, an' I laughed the louder, an' poor Masther Dick was obliged to laugh out too, although he did his best to keep a serious face on himself. And we both laughed together until our sides ached, to see me marching along with the coat-tails scraping the flure.

"This was the way with him," Michael sadly remarked. "If I scowlded him, or if I thried to undhermine him, 'twas all the same. He turned everything into a joke; there was never a cross word from him, no matther whether I was cranky or conthriving for his good. But 'twas all the same,—no cure, no stoppage of the dhrink.

"He took a start, as he sometimes did, and gave over his ways, when he took up the cudgels for Miss Ellen McMahon, who became his wife. I had my thrust in God, that by her means he might be turned from his sinfulness. Sorry, sorry am I to say that I was disappointed."

CHAPTER XV.

THE KEG OF POTTEEN.—HOW NED CULKIN WAS MADE PURBLIND.

As a general rule, the Half-pay, every night before he could get into bed, went through a perplexing contest with his composite leg. Occasionally he happened to undo the fastenings with comparative facility; but when this occurred it was a lucky chance, and was an exception to the rule. For the most part he found the straps, and buckles, and ligaments sadly out of place, intricate and complex in their arrangements, and almost impossible to be traced and loosened. My own opinion is, that the degree of complexity, more or less puzzling as the case might be, depended not a little on the extent of potations indulged in previous to seeking his couch.

A statue of Bacchus with such a leg as that supporting the Half-pay would be unclassical. But if I suppose such a limb attached to the body of the god of drunkenness, it would puzzle his divinity to unstrap it, as often as it puzzled the Half-pay, and from a like cause.

One night, or rather morning, for the dawn was faintly tinting the sky from east to west, the Half-pay was engaged in one of these struggles with his leg. The buckles were not to be found where they had been at his uprise; some one must have meddled with the fastenings in the course of the day. Who could have tampered with him? Where could the practical jest have been executed? Not on the bridge?—No. Not in the street?—No. Could it have been in the widow-woman's back room, where he had spent a jolly night?—He rather thought not. But it might have been.

Puffing very hot breath from him, as a result of his struggle, he paused to think over the affair. Was that loud single knock he heard connected with the prank played on him?—Another knock,—and

another,—with an interval between each knock, as if they were signal knocks. His head had been drooping, and he raised it. His eyes had been closed, and he distended them. And he expanded his ears to listen.

Knock—knock—knock—again. *Where* was the knocking?—Who was the knocker?—These mysterious knocks were not given at his door. No. Were they against Ned Culkin's door? He thought so.

Knock—knock—knock—a third time,—three knocks each time—yes, he had reckoned them. Three times three, made six,—no,—nine. Ay, right, —nine knocks. Was that a door pulled open?—Not his door, no,—Ned Culkin's door;—almost sure of it,—he ought to know the creak of Ned Culkin's door. Ah!—And what was that rolling along? It sounds like a big cannon-ball rolling over a wooden bridge.

Well! that is most singular, is it not? Where is the wooden bridge? There is no wooden bridge in Ned Culkin's house—no—not one. And yet he knows by the hollow sound, that the rolling of the

twenty-four-pound ball is across a wooden bridge. He'd swear to that at all events. There again!—

It *is* Ned Culkin's door that has been banged to. So far there is a certainty. But the wooden bridge, and the twenty-four-pound ball—require explanation—require to be thoroughly examined into. There was a something in the business—some concealment—some ambiguity—some mystery between nine knocks, Ned Culkin's door, the twenty-four-pound ball, and the wooden bridge. That he was solemnly bound before heaven and earth—bound—to scrutinize to the bottom.

The Half-pay endeavoured to control the swaying of his head, thereby to interrupt the singing in his brain, that he might bring his steadiest faculties to bear on this momentous matter. He would not allow the question to remain in doubt. He would issue forth. He would institute a rigid scrutiny, and leave nothing doubtful as to knocks—knockee—Ned Culkin's door—twenty-four-pound ball—or wooden bridge.

He stood up for the purpose of carrying out the

indispensable duty imposed on him, when his leg, most unaccountably, and of its own accord, separated from him and tumbled about. Of course he fell prostrate. It required considerable exertion and no small degree of ingenuity to arise and maintain his balance on the single member now remaining to him.

The task of refitting the refractory and treacherous limb that had so inopportunely deserted him, he found to be a hopeless one; so that after a few unavailing attempts, he abandoned perforce his laudable design of strict investigation, and tumbled into bed. In a very short time the occurrences of the day, together with the unexplained later events, became a mass of confusion in his brain, chasing each other in most perplexing complexity, and at times mingling together in an indescribable hodge-podge.

The Half-pay had rolled himself up in his bed-covering about four o'clock of a spring morning. At two in the afternoon of the same day he had taken his usual stand on the bridge, with his back to the parapet, bestowing his salutations to the passengers,

varied according to circumstances, as described in a previous Chapter.

Through the centre window of the little house, next door but one to that inhabited by the Half-pay, Tom O'Loughlin "the decayed gentleman" thrust his head. Tom could look out of the centre window of his residence without delaying to raise the sash. Originally this window had had twelve panes of glass in it. From time to time, nine out of the twelve had been broken away; three, therefore, only remained at the present writing. The three upper panes these were, and they had escaped fracture, as being most out of harm's way. So when Tom O'Loughlin wished to enjoy the breeze, or to note the occurrences without, his head was thrust as far as the shoulders through the centre opening of the lowest tier but one, and generally both his arms were protruded at the same time through the spaces at either side, that his hands might meet and fondle each other as was their wont, beneath his chin. It will be understood from what is set down here that if an unglazed window gives an appearance of dilapi-

dation to a house, and causes besides an excess of ventilation at times, such a window is not nevertheless without its recommendation.

As the Half-pay stood on the bridge, the decayed gentleman looked from his pillory, and observing his friend where he expected to find him, he issued forth to join him.

"A good morrow and the best of luck to you, Colonel," said the decayed gentleman.

"Maw, maw," returned the Half-pay.

"You're looking grand out-an'-out to-day, Colonel, and more of that to you I say," flattered Tom O'Loughlin.

"Right—well!—"

"Sure I knew you were by looking at you, and right glad am I to see it. Believe my word for it, I am. Well—well—well. Hadn't we a great night out-an'-out last night?"

"Jolly—jovial!—"

"Dick O'Meara is a grand fellow, entirely, entirely, merry, and hearty, and good-natured. A prince of a fellow, by gog."

"Fine—fellow!—"

"Ay, every inch a good fellow;—the heart in the right spot, Colonel,—and able to take his nourishment, Colonel, I can tell you. When he used to come among us, he never earned a curse for leaving his liquor behind him—never!"

"Sound—stomach?"

"Sound as a trout. He was worth his weight in gold at our meetings round the festive board, until he was unfortunate enough to get married, the poor fool. His wife was making a stay-at-home-John of him. The Lord knows my heart bled for him;—I pitied him; indeed, indeed I did."

And the decayed gentleman assumed a most lachrymose expression of face, and his tone was sad, very sad.

"Why?—"

"Well—to be sure he picked out a beautiful young wife—"

"Lovely—creature!" and the Half-pay solemnly raised his beaver, and put it on again.

"But, my poor, honest, hearty Dick O'Meara—I compassionate you for all that. Your handsome

wife was making a *sheelah* of you! But he'll come on again, Colonel, please goodness. He'll snap the apron-string, and be king of the Gregory once more! He didn't go far last night, to be sure, and made off before we began to spend the evening. But 'tis a good sign to see him leave the petticoat government at all."

"I—like—him!"

"He is to be liked, by gog, and the more you meet him, the more *gra* you'll have for him. Colonel,—'twill be a little paradise within at Ned Culkin's for a good month or more."

"How?"

"Ah, ha!—Did you hear nothing last night before you lay down?—anything in this way?—" The decayed gentleman gave three knocks with his knuckles against the Half-pay's chest.

"Yes—yes!" — snapped the Half-pay eagerly; and he, in turn, gave three separate punches downwards—with his composite leg.

"And something rolling along with a hollow sound?"

"Yes—yes!"

"*Nine* knocks in all?"

"Yes!"

"Well! Darby Kenealy give nine knocks at Ned Culkin's door to warn him that he was there—with a keg of his primest potteen!"

"Ay!"

"And when the door was opened, in rolled the keg along Ned Culkin's hall—all along to the back door it went—rolling."

"Yes!"

"And then you may be sure Ned Culkin went to roost crowing like a game-cock."

"I see."

"You know, Colonel, that an 'officer of the excise,' or a gauger, like Ned Culkin—the one means the other—is made near-sighted, like the best of us, by drinking potteen-punch, and could not see the still it came from if he had Lord Rosse's telescope."

"I see. I—see!"

"And so Darby Kenealy gave nine knocks at

Ned Culkin's door, and in rolled the keg of potteen when the door was opened. Ned Culkin stood well behind the door, and he didn't see Darby Kenealy at all, nor did Darby Kenealy see Ned Culkin. But for all that Darby knew right well that he'd make the gauger purblind. And purblind he will be, and purblind you and I will be to keep him company, as long as the keg of potteen has a *thuch* in it."

"I—see!"

"Isn't that good news, Colonel? We'll have our skinful while it lasts. Night or day we won't be sober, please goodness! and we'll drink Darby Kenealy's health, and that he may live long, many and many a time—so we will!"

"Right!"

"Here's Ned Culkin himself coming down to us, and I'll bet ten to one—will you take me up, Colonel?"

"No."

"That we'll begin the boozing-match this very night."

With a tottering step Ned Culkin joined the

other two. He did not totter like a drunkard, but like one affected with paralysis.

"Raw, could day," he said, although the sun was shining blandly, and there was little breeze to temper the ardour of his rays.

"Indeed and upon my word 'tis very sharp weather," assented the decayed gentleman, his thoughts fixed on the expected invitation to his "little paradise." "Very sharp, cold weather it is, neighbour Culkin."

"Hot—hot!" dissented the Half-pay.

"I am shivering, every limb of me," said Ned Culkin, "and I'm could, down to the nails of my toes. Uffe—uffe! There's like an ague on me. Colonel?"

"Well!"

"We'll go down to Joe Darmody's and have a glass of brandy to warm us. Will you come, Curnel? Will you come, Tom?"

"Come!" answered the Half-pay.

"With a heart and a half," gleefully assented Tom O'Loughlin.

"Before we go, Curnel," said Ned Culkin, "I want to tell you there will be a few friends with me in my poor cabin to-night. You'll be with me. Tom, won't you?"

"I'll have the honour and the pleasure," replied Tom.

"And you'll make one among us, Curnel? I have some good stuff. You wouldn't find a headache in a hogshead of it. You'll come, Curnel?"

"I will."

"We'll be pleasant as pleasant can be, Curnel. And now we're off to Joe Darmody's."

The three worthies set out together. Ned Culkin was obliged to cling to the Half-pay for support; Tom O'Loughlin cringed and sidled beside them.

There was a kind of wooden screen at the end of Joe Darmody's counter; behind this Ned Culkin led the way. The brandy bottle was brought down to the three friends. Ned Culkin swallowed glass after glass until his "shivering of could" not only left him, but he became brisk, pert, and nimble. Tom O'Loughlin waxed more oleaginous of deport-

ment every moment. And the Half-pay stared the more intently at every one until the bottle was emptied.

Ned Culkin never paid for the brandy at Joe Darmody's. Why he did not, Joe Darmody and he knew best.

CHAPTER XVI.

"LOVE IN A COTTAGE."

For a year and eleven months—Michael Hanrahan was very precise as to the lapse of time, sore cause had he to remember that same—for a year and eleven months after the arrival of "the posy" at the Cottage near the Cascades, Michael Hanrahan was, to use his own words, "as happy a boy as walked undher the canopy of the sky."

And why should he not be happy? The elements of happiness were within him. To begin with his own immediate concerns; making all due allowance for the aberrations flesh is heir to, his life was a blameless life. His conscience might be said to hold almost a sinecure office. I might suppose that

his conscience smiled rather than frowned when Michael went astray in his prayers at night, and with a denunciation of himself, said: "Bad manners to you, where are you galloping?" and paused, and began again. But there were no grounds of serious accusation after the day, so that Michael and his conscience were cordial bed-fellows; and Michael's monitor rather smoothed his pillow than otherwise.

Then, as to his mundane affairs. Was there not the blooming, wavy-haired Mary, with her everlasting smile, to meet him everywhere about the house, out in the fields, and on the mossy rock near the cascades? Mary, pure of heart—and warm of heart too—made no concealment of her love for Michael Hanrahan. And if Michael Hanrahan did not love his Mary,—"*nau bocklish!*" as we say in Ireland.

"When you're in your coorting days," said Michael, "you're like a bird in the spring o' the year; your heart is as light as a feather, and you're ready to fly if you only had wings."

Furthermore, Mary and Michael were gathering

feathers to feather their nest. Mary was saving her wages, and Michael was adding to the store, and Mary was cash-keeper to the firm. So that, if we go no farther than his personal concerns lead us, why should not Michael Hanrahan be "as happy a boy as walked undher the canopy of the sky?"

The least selfish of mortals, however, was Michael Hanrahan. But, to say nothing at all of the good terms between his conscience and himself, or of Mary's smile, and Mary's love, was not everything going on in the cottage, like as if "twas in Paradise they were living?"

There was Richard O'Meara, attending to his business every day from breakfast to dinner, as steady as a rock.

At this point Michael put on a face half grave, half cynical.

"Between you and I," he said, "'turney's work isn't the luckiest. When they set two people slapping at each other on what they call 'the green cloth,' but which is a dirty deal table, without a

scrap of cloth on it of any colour, they put me in mind of the 'handlers' of cocks in a cockpit. 'Tisn't out of liking for the foolish, quarrelsome birds that they spur them, and cut their combs and gills, and clip their feathers, and make 'em fly at each other. And whatever way the battle goes, both of the cocks get clipped when 'tis over. Not to run away with the story, howsomever, Masther Dick wasn't a downright hawk of an attorney, like some that pluck the feathers out of every bird they catch or lay fingers on. He knew there couldn't be two heads or two harps on a halfpenny, and he didn't tell people they were right when he knew they were wrong."

And notwithstanding the "'turney's work," matters went on swimmingly at the cottage. "Just as well as if Masther Dick was saying the litanies all day long in the office, by no manner of means likely to be."

The joint description by Michael and by Mary of this period of Richard O'Meara's wedded life was specially minute. Both of them dwelt on the occur-

rences of those halcyon days with a liking for the subject.

Almost invariably, Richard O'Meara was summoned to his dinner by "the posy" in person. She taps ever so gently against the glass of the office window, and with "a beck, and nod, and wreathed smile," invites him to join her. Whatever he is engaged on, is at once thrown aside, and almost instantly all trace of business gravity is left behind at the office desk, the arm of the invited is round his wife's waist, and they proceed together to the front of the cottage. On their way there is much chattering, and the voices are mirthful in their mingling.

Nothing at all has happened to baby. Never—no, never—never was young mother blessed with such a darling, sweet, good-tempered little baby. And he is growing handsomer every hour; he will be just such a fine fellow as his father, if God spares him to them. And, oh! may He in his love and mercy guard it!

Oh, yes! the Colonel *has* been in to pay his

daily visit. Yes, and he said, "Maw—maw,—Ma—dame!" when he came, and "Maw—maw, Ma—dame!" again at his departure. Not one other word did he utter, though he remained half an hour; and he never removed his eyes from the baby but once while he remained! It was very plain he was fond of it,—but who *could* see the darling, lovely little fellow without loving him?

And when Mary, and baby, and baby's mother had gone out for their walk, they had had their wonted three or four more salutations from the dear old Colonel, as usual, at different points on their route. And, oh! never did anything agree with baby like the fresh air from the water. It was a real pleasure to look at his lovely little face coming back, rosy as a peach-apple, and fresh as a rosebud! etcetera, etcetera.

And, arrived at the cottage-door, the two go up-stairs to take a peep at the same all-important little being in his crib. With cautious, noiseless tread they approached the little sleeper. He is always comfortably asleep at this hour; and Mary stitching

away very industriously while sitting by his cot, and of course smiling as usual, although no one is there to smile at. The big, stalwart man must kneel down, or he cannot reach the baby's face with his lips. The mother leans over his shoulder as he stoops, and she whispers softly in his ear, and he looks up at her, and returns her smile, and nods his head in approval of what she has said.

Arm-in-arm they descend to the dining-room. Michael is at the door, bowing and waving his napkin to them in token of welcome. Nimbly and officiously Michael places the "posy's" chair, and Richard O'Meara and his young wife smilingly seat themselves; and gaily and pleasantly the meal proceeds, Ellen laughing cheerily at her husband's sallies. Michael, looking from one to the other with the fulness of his heart in his eyes, now and again puts in his word. Most often he says affectedly foolish things, for the purpose of exciting risibility at his own expense; and his foster-brother and foster-sister-in-law (if such a relationship can be admitted) enjoy his harmless

knavery, the drift of which is evident enough to both of them.

The table is cleared; the decanters and fruit are placed upon it; Richard O'Meara moves his chair round to his wife's side, and they clink glasses gaily to drink the health of the young Richard. And Michael Hanrahan, according to usage duly established, holds out *his* glass to have it filled,—and filled it is to overflowing; and Michael throws back his head, looking directly upward, and presents the bottom of his glass to the ceiling, leaving no sign of heeltap as he pledges the toast.

Lo and behold!—the door opens, and in comes Mary dandling *young* Richard O'Meara. A brisk, bright little fellow he is. Richard O'Meara the younger is eight months old or so. A fine child of his age he is. He sits up very stout in his nurse's arms. Michael walks backwards and chirps for him and for Mary;—the chirp is intended for both. One look at Michael's capacious mouth, now puckered up most curiously, suffices for the younker. Richard

the younger is otherwise attracted by his mother's gentle call. His eye, directed by the sound, recognizes the features that even a baby so soon learns to distinguish. With outstretched arms he utters forthwith his baby supplication; with outstretched arms his mother receives him, and baby Richard rests supremely happy in his mother's tender embrace. The little note of pleasure uttered by that tiny atom of humanity is heard by the mother's heart, and a tear, not of sorrow, but of ineffable love, falls on the blooming face over which she bends so fondly.

Stretched at full length on his mother's lap, gazing up at her he is, when Richard the elder comes to look down on him. Richard the younger, although he knows as much as any child of his age that was ever born, has not yet learnt the unit table. Yet, without being able to reckon one, two, he perceives that a second face has been placed close to that of his mother, and if he is not much mistaken he has seen that second face before. Yes, yes, he remembers it! and he crows his pleasure at the reminiscence.

"Take your boy, Richard," Ellen says.

"Put the rascal here, Ellen," answers Richard, stretching out his brawny arms to receive his offspring. So on the arms of the father the crowing boy is laid. Richard the younger is highly gratified at his new position. The see-saw motion comes up to his idea of luxury, as Richard the elder paces up and down with him, moving his burthen to and fro, humming softly for his special delectation; and the laughing boy crows up his answer gleefully.

It is a picture to see the young wife, with both her hands clasped together as if in prayer,—and who knows but that it is in prayer?—and her rounded chin resting on those clasped hands, as she follows with her eyes of love the motions of the two beings she so doats upon.

After a little, Richard O'Meara and his wife, and Mary carrying baby, and Teague,—Michael stays at home to prepare tea,—set out for a ramble. Tea over, some time later, Richard O'Meara sips his glass of whisky-toddy; and shortly after, the whole

household is at rest, except Teague, who by night is the vigilant warder of the cottage and its inmates.

"As happy as if 'twas in paradise they were living," quoth honest Michael.

CHAPTER XVII.

MICHAEL'S GATHERING GRIEFS.

MICHAEL HANRAHAN was, as I have stated, very certain that up to, and including the term of one year and eleven months after the marriage of his foster-brother, matters went on at the cottage pretty much as particularized in the last Chapter. That period had scarcely gone by, however, when symptoms of a change were noticed by the anxious and watchful Michael; premonitions that caused him to apprehend the return of Richard O'Meara to his former baneful habits: and Michael's heart was sore and heavy with forebodings of evil.

In the fourteenth month after his birth, it came to pass that Richard O'Meara the younger was

affected with some infantine ailment. His mother could not be convinced but that, if she ceased to watch him by day and by night, his loss would be the consequence; and during this period her husband, left alone after dinner, sauntered now and again into "The Town of the Cascades," and my friend Michael noticed with dire alarm, that on returning from these visits he used to come home, to use Michael's own phrase "a little riz" (an abbreviation of risen or raised, and meaning "elevated," or "tipsy").

The interview on the bridge between "the decayed gentleman" and the Half-pay, noticed in a former Chapter, will here be recalled. It will be remembered, too, that on this occasion, when Tom O'Loughlin had enlightened the Half-pay as to the mystery of the signal knocks and the rolling of the twenty-four-pound ball over the wooden bridge, he spoke in highly eulogistic terms of Richard O'Meara's boon companionship, and expressed his friendly and disinterested gratification to find that the object of this panegyric showed laudable symptoms of eman-

cipating himself from the thraldom to which he had for a time so lamentably subserved.

It was in company with Tom O'Loughlin and the Half-pay, and Ned Culkin and some others, that Richard O'Meara had become "a little riz" on the occasions so sorrowfully noticed by Michael Hanrahan.

Richard O'Meara the younger recovered in time from his attack of—whatever it may have been; —and it was the opinion of the household that he must have been laid up with the malady to which the youthful only are subject, and known only as "growing pains," so marvellously had the boy's stature increased during his illness. It would appear also, that while he lay confined to his cot, his frame had become, as it were, solidified, and thereby more capable of retaining the impressions made upon it. For he had become wonderfully acute in his perceptions, and active with his reasoning powers. He could reckon heads, and divide the aggregate into units, and separately recognize each unit. He could distinguish Michael Hanrahan's face from Teague's

face; and to all appearance he considered the comeliness on the dog's side, when exercising his new faculty of comparison, for he smiled at Teague more rapturously than at Michael. He knew perfectly — but this was no new knowledge — that his father was not his mother; and as for Mary, his nurse, he would indeed have belied the high estimate in which he was held, could he for an instant fail as to the individuality of her never-fading smile.

In the evenings, after dinner, Richard O'Meara the elder again became the playfellow and nurse of this marvellous child. In a round, mellow voice he often sang for him, while tossing him upwards—

> "Look at the baby on the wall;
> Look at the baby dancing!
> Look at the baby, one and all;
> Look at the baby prancing!"

Michael Hanrahan danced to this ditty, nearly shaking his head off as he bounced about, snapping his forefinger and thumbs together. And Mary waved her hands and smiled at the delighted aero-

naut; while Ellen, the mother, in her own quiet way, looked on delighted.

But although Michael Hanrahan joined in the evening festivities at the cottage, he was oppressed by sad misgivings. He did not fail to mark that Richard O'Meara drank deeper than he had done since his marriage. That the reformation which by the direct agency of "the posy" he had reckoned on, was becoming doubtful. And Michael noted with sorrow that Richard O'Meara's visits to the town on business, were more frequent than need be; that the latest visit was the longest, and that the longer the visit, the more "riz" was he when he came home.

Michael Hanrahan, for good reasons of his own, had no relish for the great exuberancy of spirits his foster-brother brought back with him after these, his business visits. The jollity of manner was too extravagant to please Michael; the laughter was too loud, and too often unmeaning in its purpose. Swagger, jollity, pointless boisterous laughter, all

were evidences to Michael that his foster-brother had come home "riz."

Michael Hanrahan had such thorough reliance on the affection and fidelity of Mary that, as he declared to me, "he didn't care to the value of an ould cronny-bean halfpenny if an out-an'-out dandy came from Dublin-town to make sheep's eyes at her."

And furthermore, he declared "that,"—figuratively personifying himself as a cock—"'twouldn't ruffle a feather of my top-knot if the smoothest of them peelers that have nothing to do but to beguile the counthry-girls" laid his snares for her.

No, it was not at the prompting of the "green-eyed monster," jealousy, that Michael felt sickly at heart when his foster-brother chucked Mary under the chin and called her "a plump pullet." No, but Michael understood by the rakish, rollicking manner in which the chucking was performed that his foster-brother was impelled to such freedom in consequence of being "riz."

And when Richard O'Meara came home "riz,"

Michael was far from approving of his altered manner to "the posy." There was more of ardour, less of delicacy in it. Humble and untutored as Michael was, he possessed a natural refinement of feeling which enabled him to perceive the difference of accost to "the posy" by the same man when sober and when "riz." And perhaps of all the symptoms of returning bad habit, the last mentioned aroused Michael's greatest apprehension, and gave him most pain.

"She'd often hang her head and look down," said Michael, "like the primrose the sun would shine too bowld on."

There was, and mayhap there still is, within view and sound of the river cascades, a moss-covered rock with an ancient hawthorn rising canopy-like above it. I will name this the trysting-rock of my narrative.

Whenever Mary wished to hold conference with Michael, and that Michael was not within doors,—or *vice versâ*, to this mossy rock near the cascades, either went to seek the other, and seldom or never

was the seeker disappointed by finding the trysting-rock untenanted.

Of a certain evening, Michael, anxious to confide to Mary's sympathizing bosom his fears and his anxieties, and to consult her on a sagacious plan he had devised, went forth, and, as he had expected, he found Mary.

As he came within view of the trysting-rock and of Mary, Michael paused a moment to enjoy the pastime that was going on.

Richard O'Meara, junior, was by this time not altogether dependent on others for locomotion, and Mary was engaged, snatching up her charge, racing with him to some distance from the rock, placing him on his feet, scampering back and reseating herself, and then with outspread hands and voice enticing the young pedestrian to her. Michael Hanrahan forgot his griefs for the moment as he heard the child's shout of rapture, and observed with what desperate resolution of purpose the delighted pupil dashed towards his preceptress, and flung himself into her arms.

"Again to it, Mary," shouted Michael. And again the boy was placed at a further distance from the rock, and again the race to Mary was achieved gloriously. And again, and again, and again, and again, and again, before Michael caught him up and kissed him. Then placing the beautiful boy on Mary's knee Michael sat beside her. Richard O'Meara, junior, was a safe confidant at nearly every meeting between Mary and Michael, for although he could lisp a few words, his vocabulary was not sufficiently extensive to enable him to tell tales.

"Mary," said Michael, "I'm come to tell you my griefs. Oh, Mary! Mary!—'tis going back again to his bad life, he is."

"Ah! Michael—'twould be the sore pity. I have my hopes, Michael, and my trust in heaven, that he'll think of himself an' stop short."

"I'd give up anything in the world, barring your own self, Mary, that your eyes could see clearer than mine. But I have a knowledge of him since we were boys together. 'Twas never half-an'-half

with Dick O'Meara. 'Twas neck-or-nothing with him ever and always, and he won't stop."

"More's the pity, Michael, more is the pity. But don't give up, he'll mend—he'll mend yet, with heaven's help."

"If 'twas only myself that was to rue it, Mary, —though I can't help having the love at my heart for him,—it wouldn't be of so much matter. But our beautiful posy, Mary;—if through his wickedness that creature's heart is saddened—and though she doesn't complain, she isn't the pleasant bird she was, I can tell you—"

"She is not, indeed, Michael; thrue for you—!"

"If through his wickedness then he brings grief upon our posy,—he'll suffer for it. And—and—that he may—!"

"Michael! You wouldn't offer up that prayer?"

"No, no; I believe not. But if he hurts our posy, he'll suffer for it without my prayer. Be you sure of that."

"The Lord guide an' purtect us, and turn him back into the right road!"

"Amen to that, Mary. Amen!"

"Michael—?"

"Well, Mary."

"Couldn't anything be done to cure him?"

"You remind me of it, Mary. I have a plan in my own head, and I want to take counsel with you."

"What is your plan, Michael?"

"One plan I'll work out first. I'll do my endeavours to stop his dhrinking at home at any rate."

"How will you bring that about?"

"I'll tell you. I'll keep the liquor from him!"

"If you could do *that*, Michael, 'twould be the charity!"

"You'll see that I will. And this very night I'll begin. He's gone into the town, but he'll get no liquor when he comes back. Mary—"

"Well, Michael?"

"'Tis the Devil that brews the dhrink. An' if he doesn't do it with his own two claws, he's standing by present when it's made."

"Indeed 'tis likely."

"'Tis the down thruth, Mary. May my bitther curse light upon it for the liquor!"

Strengthened by Mary's hearty approval of his plans for restricting Richard O'Meara in the home-allowance of liquor, Michael arranged, with her assistance, the details of his operations, and then the two went home together.

But honest Michael's devices were seldom successful in their issue, and although Mary regarded him as a Solomon, and endorsed his sagacious contrivances, it will be seen that in more instances than the present their consultations and joint arrangements tended to little good.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW MICHAEL'S PLAN SUCCEEDED.

Up to the period at which this Chapter opens, Richard O'Meara had always returned early from his evening visits to "The Town of the Cascades." On the occasion now to be noticed, two hours of the night had passed ere he opened the wicket leading into his flower-garden. He was heard, in his approach to the cottage, singing at the top of his voice, and this until he reached its very door. There, under the projecting porch, stood his wife, with her gentle greeting,—

"Welcome home to me, Richard."

His reply was cordial, but it was boisterous and unsuitable.

"Ellen, my queen of roses, is that you? If I am not proud to meet you, Ellen, my beauty, may I be a bornoch! If I'm not proud to see you, may Richard O'Meara be a bornoch! Ha, ha, ha!"

And his laugh at the excellence of his conceit was as loud as the roar of the cascades.

"Only think now, of Richard O'Meara—that—stands two feet six—in his leather—changed into a bornoch!—living under—a shell—not one inch across!—sticking fast—to the rocks—down in—the bay!—Well!—upon my soul—'tis sublime to imagine it—isn't it, Ellen?"

Richard O'Meara's stentorian laughter had several times interrupted his words, and now he bent backwards to give full vent to his uproarious mirth.

"Isn't it sublime, Ellen?"

"It would be a great change indeed, Richard."

"But you don't seem to enjoy it, Ellen?"

"Indeed I do, Richard dear," and she essayed to mingle her little silvery tinkle with her husband's noisy explosion.

"Upon my soul it *would* be a change, as you call it; no doubt about it."

Here his face and his voice became serious.

"There would be an advantage, however. Those damned rascals with their parchments and their diablerie, couldn't get at me. Ha, ha, ha! I'd defy them to creep under my shell. They couldn't, they couldn't,—and, deuce mend them, the litigious scoundrels that keep a pleasant fellow with his nose rubbing against his desk all day—till it gets sharp and vixenish."

Again his loud merriment gave place to gravity.

"In the domestic privacy of a bornoch," he said, "there is an advantage, surely. And I suppose he has plenty of time, and some to spare for cogitation and calculation. Ay, that may be,—he is a hermit,—a bornoch is. And he leads a virtuous, abstemious, and inoffensive life. He does, no doubt.—But," and his ringing laughter returned, while he shook his wife's hands so violently that she winced,—"but for all that—devil's in me if Richard O'Meara would change with him. He hasn't a wife

like mine—nor a wife at all—the stupid wretch!—There wouldn't be room for a wife in the bornoch's shell. And, furthermore, Richard O'Meara wouldn't —exchange—his beef,—and his mutton,—and his ham and turkey,—and his potteen-punch,—for the philosophic bornoch's breakfast,—lunch,—dinner,—supper,—and lush,—of salt water—salt water,—from one end of the year to the other. No—no!—the life of a bornoch is not like my life, Ellen, my queen!"

"Dear Richard, will you not come in?"

"Come in? To be sure I will. 'Tisn't a bornoch's roof that's over us, Ellen,—no,—no!"

And, snatching his wife up in his arms, he raced in with her, shoved the parlour door open with his shoulder, placed her sitting on the sofa, retreated a few steps, and stood looking on her admiringly, while his laughter filled the room.

The door opened, and Mary Malone entered, bearing the child in her arms. Richard the younger was in his night-dress; he had been roused from his sleep by his father's boisterousness, and, notwith-

standing Mary's dissuasion, conveyed distinctly in his own baby-language, he would partake of the merriment he understood to be going on.

Richard O'Meara turned, and snatched his son from the nurse's arms.

"Mary," he said, "you're as blooming as ever, and as smiling as ever," and he pinched Mary's fresh cheek. Michael was looking on, and, in the sense before explained, he felt the pinch upon Mary's cheek like a heavy blow inflicted on himself.

"Where is my foster-brother Michael?"

The questioner followed Mary's eye.

"Ay, ay; I see the rogue. Take off that glum phiz, my honest fellow, and look as a chap in his courting days ought to look. Mary, you and Michael here shall be flesh of one flesh before this day month, whether you consent or not. Ellen—"

"Well, Richard?"

"What are we to make of this rascal—this boy of ours!"

"I leave that entirely to you, Richard."

"Well—let me see. 'Tis a serious consideration, Ellen. Look at me, Dick, straight in the face, like a man. Ay, that will do. An attorney you shan't be; they're half shark, half mole, every man of them,—your father included. You look too jovial to be made a judge of, Dick, you do. I don't think you're sanctimonious, no more than your father, so you are unfit to be a bishop. You'll be a stout fellow, Dick, six feet two, like your sire; there's fire in your eye, my boy, so I think—we'll make a general of you. You hear that, Ellen? Yes, a general, nothing else. Come, General, mount your charger!"

He raised the little fellow so incautiously that Ellen, pale and trembling, found it difficult to suppress a scream. Mary's arms were involuntarily stretched out to reclaim him, and Michael wrung his hands. But the General himself felt no alarm. His legs were placed over the shoulders of the charger, who grasped them in front, and the bold equestrian steadied his seat by clutching in both hands his father's clustering hair.

"Right,—right, General! Hold on to the mane stoutly—we are about to charge at the head of the cavalry. Out of the way, there, or we'll ride you down and sabre you! Charge!"

Away went the charger, at full gallop, round and round the room, the General shouting on his shoulders. And round and round they went, until the heads of the anxious lookers-on were dizzy. Then came a sudden pause.

"Your charger requires to be watered, General, or he'll never be able to break through the enemy's flank."

He turned to the sideboard.

"Hallo! Commissary Michael!" he cried, "what has become of the decanters? Bring in the decanters, like a gay, honest fellow."

And he sang,—

"Fill the bumper fair;
Every drop we sprinkle
O'er the brow of care,
Smooths away a wrinkle."

"Come, Michael, 'fill the bumper fair' for the

General's charger. The water is here—off with you for the other ingredient!"

Michael came shuffling forward, endeavouring to put on the sheepish look he could assume on occasion. But there was a nervous quivering about his lips, and an anxiety mingled with alarm in his eye, that both operated to spoil the signification of vacant simplicity it was his wish to index. Michael was now about to try the well-meant experiment agreed on between himself and Mary, the plan so excellently devised, and so sure to be effective. But the excited state in which he saw his foster-brother, raised his apprehension that the essay would not be altogether so practicable as he had decided it to be. He feared he was now venturing on very dangerous ground. Yet his purpose was laudable, and he would proceed. Very skilfully, as he supposed, did he begin his manœuvres.

"Sure, Masther Dick, the General, as you christened him, God bless him! is dhragging at your poor head enough to tire you out. And, General, I'm thinking you ought to dismount from your

grand charger, and shut your peepers. It's time we were all mounting, and getting into our beds, snug and cosy. The misthress, the crature, is lost with the sleep, I know."

Michael bobbed his head, and winked both his eyes at the mistress, to intimate that she ought to confirm his assertion. But she was silent.

"Afther your dancing and galloping undher the General, Masther Dick," he went on, "you must be mortial tired, and you must want to stretch your bones sadly. And so, in heaven's name—"

"Ay, and so in heaven's name, as you say, Michael, I must have my lush before I go. I am as thirsty as—"

"A lime-burner,—he! he! he!" put in Michael.

"The aggregate thirst of forty lime-burners, and forty smiths, and forty glass-blowers, would not reach the thirst of the single individual that is panting for his lush. Off with you, man, if you don't want to see me shrivel up before your eyes, like scorched parchment."

Michael, giggling as he went, raced out. In a

very short time he returned, holding a decanter by the neck, between the first and second finger of his right hand. This he deposited on the sideboard. It would have been difficult for you, even had you been present, to understand the half-terrified, half-simulated simplicity of his more than usually pallid face, as he awaited the result of his proceeding.

"Come, General," said Richard O'Meara gaily, "when we have had our drink, we'll dash through the bayonets of the enemy and gain the day. Hold on hard by the mane, General, while I mix my jorum. The veriest coward is a hero, General, with good liquor under his sword-belt, as we'll prove to the enemy. Eh?—what's this?"

While speaking in this gleeish strain, Richard O'Meara had been engaged pouring water into his glass, and then having leant the decanter to pour in the whiskey—lo! no whisky came forth. Richard, as yet unsuspicious of Michael's drift, handed him back the decanter, with—

"You've made a grand mistake here, my honest fellow. Take this back to the cellar, and insert

into the orifice of the soulless vessel the nose of the cock of Darby Kenealy's keg of potteen, and let the sparkling beverage flow in until it gurgles small when reaching the neck. Your mistake has been a d—d annoyance, I can tell you. Besides the blank disappointment, just as the cup was about being carried to the lip, you give the enemy time to rally, and so may cause the General to lose his battle. Be off and bring the decanter brimful."

"Masther Dick——"

"Well, Master Michael?"

"We're like the strand of the bay when the tide is out."

"How like the strand of the bay when the tide is out?"

"We're run drhy like the strand,—he! he! he!"

"What do you mean by that?"

"Our potteen—he! he! he! is run out, and so we have the drhy strand,—he! he! he! There isn't as much in the house as would fill a two-year-old child's thimble—he!—he!—h-e-e!"

The last attempt at a giggle was a failure as

expressive of mirth. The he—he—h-e-e! was plaintive and quavering, and from poor Michael's perturbed lips sounded more like a wail than a laugh. And little wonder; for Michael saw that his foster-brother's brows were knit close together, and that the eyes flashing from beneath their lowering clouds flashed no sunlight, but the intense glare that foreboded a storm. He had seen the same murky light in those eyes before.

"Hah—hah—hah!"

And to Michael's ears his foster-brother's scoffing laughter was terrible.

"Come, sir!" he cried suddenly, in a loud, angry voice, and he made a stride towards Michael. The movement was so rapid, and so unexpected, that the tiny General, taken unawares, tumbled headlong from his saddle. The mother uttered a sharp scream, Mary endeavoured to grasp her charge, and Michael, momentarily remorseful for having roused a temper hitherto latent, wailed and twisted his fingers together. The father seized his son before he reached the ground, but that so roughly, that

the little fellow, unsoldierlike though it was, bellowed with all his might.

The loud voice of the Goliath of the scene, the mother's screams, Mary's exclamations, Michael's remorseful groans, and the small General's cry of terror, produced in the apartment a noise nothing short of tumult.

Richard O'Meara's moody eyes turned from one to the other.

"Here, girl," he said; "take this brat from me and remove him."

Mary clasped her nursling to her bosom, and nestling there he became still, stealing looks now and again at his father's altered face, and hiding to escape the impression it produced on him.

"And now, Sir," said Richard O'Meara, seizing Michael by the collar, and shaking him as if he were a reed, "why have you dared to practise your ill-performed buffoonery on me? Why, under cover of such assumed tom-foolery, have you dared to insinuate that I have drunk too much?"

"Masther Dick, indeed I didn't—"

"You lying whelp!—you did so insinuate. Dare you say it now openly, sirrah, without personating the folly that does not belong to you? Dare you say openly—that I am—drunk? Answer me, cur? Am I drunk?—am I?—answer me!"

At each question Michael was shaken violently by the strong arm that held him. It was with difficulty he could gasp out his reply.

"Masther—Dick!—you are—not a—downright—drunken man—but—"

"But what?—finish your sentence. But what?"

"If you take—more—you will—disgrace us all!—If you take more—you will—be—drunk!"

"Hah! By——"

And the room was filled with the boisterous oath which I will not record.

"——You are a virulent, slandering cur. Were I even to drink until my head burst open, how comes it that such as you should attempt to control me? By ——," and the oath was repeated, "I will dislocate every joint in your body before I stop."

At this mad moment, when the infuriated man seemed blindly intent on the execution of his threat, two little hands clasped his arm. He started, and looked down at his wife's pale, beseeching face.

"My beloved Richard!" she softly said.

The voice appealed to his heart, if not to his reason. There was a hush of the storm; the strong grasp relaxed, and Michael freed himself and retreated to a little distance.

"Was it with your consent, Ellen, that this paltry, presumptuous trick was practised on me?"

"Upon my honour, no, dearest Richard!"

"I believe you. Then sit down, Ellen, and do not interfere. Go you, sirrah, fill up that decanter, and bring it hither instantly. Else I will so chastise you that your nearest of kin will not recognize you."

"Go, Michael, go!" added the wife.

Michael's pale face turned yet paler, but he replied, calmly and deliberately,

"Do as you say, Masther Dick, do, if it pleasures you. 'Twill be no hard task for you to

work out your threatenings. You are a tall and powerful man, and I am a small and delicate one. Your arm is strong and heavy, while mine is puny and weak. If you will chastise me as you say, little chance have I to make head against you. And—now that I see—you're fixed on your own destruction, 'tis little matter to me if you stretched me at your feet this moment a corpse. Do, use your strength upon me. But, come what may, I'll give no helping hand to your downfall. I'll not be the one to hand you poison. Not I, Masther Dick, not I. Not if you struck me with your heavy hand until the life left me!"

The last words of this long protest were scarcely audible, for Michael's voice trembled. He burst into tears, and covering his face with both his hands, he sobbed convulsively.

Michael's temperament was feminine. He lacked the bodily nerve that urges to pugnacity, but he possessed the moral courage to do without wincing what he considered right.

His words, the manner of their delivery, and the

tender, womanlike affection they displayed, had a powerful effect on Richard O'Meara. He looked on the poor fellow remorsefully,—his eyes softened. Mary thought this a favourable opportunity to lead Michael away. Before this, however, she whispered to her mistress, and Ellen spoke up whisperingly to her husband. Mary had slipped out, filled the decanter, and placed it on the sideboard. And so ended the notable plan that Michael and Mary had so hopefully devised.

As, arm-in-arm, they passed into the hall, some one retreated before them. It was Nora Spruhan, who had been a listener to the contention within.

Nora paused in the centre of the hall, and addressed Michael and Mary.

"The day of reckoning for me is nigh at hand," she said. And then she turned swiftly down the passage leading to the kitchen.

"Lord help us!—'tis likely to be coming," Michael groaned as he looked after the girl.

CHAPTER XIX.

SUITE.

And did Richard O'Meara allow the kindly feelings natural to him full scope, when the outburst of passion resulting from partial excess had subsided?

No.

Silently and gloomily he sat him down, and leaned his head upon his hand. There was a self-accuser within him, and the mirror that was hel before his mind's eye was irksome to look in.

So, to escape the self-reproach he felt, he grasped the liquor Mary had brought in, and he drank—and drank—and drank.

After a while he desired his wife to leave him. Too much terrified by what she had witnessed

to think of refusing, she obeyed without expostulation.

And there Richard O'Meara remained until the whisky he had been supplied with was exhausted.

After a short, feverish sleep, he arose betimes, but with an aching head and nervous hand. He repaired to his office at an early hour, and there affected to be occupied. This, however, was mere affectation; he was unfit for the simplest details of business. He awaited his wife's summons to breakfast, and this he instantly obeyed.

"Ellen, dear Ellen," he supplicated, "can you forgive me? I have outraged and insulted you, my wife;—will you pardon me?"

"Pardon you, dearest Richard?—Oh, yes!—You were not unkind to me during your temporary forgetfulness."

"I thank you, Ellen,—I thank you. But to this poor fellow I *have* been unkind—and cruel. One moment, Ellen, one moment."

Michael was standing in the hall, looking sad and dejected, as his foster-brother entered with "the

posy." Richard O'Meara went over to him. He took one of Michael's hands in his, and laid the other on his shoulder, as he stooped down to whisper in his ear.

"Michael," he said, "I ask your forgiveness. It is the last time you shall see me so affected, Michael —the last time."

"From the bottom of my heart I pray," answered Michael, "that it may be the last time. Masther Dick, ask of God on high that he may give you his holy grace to enable you to keep your word."

* * * * *

"Michael was of opinion," said Mary Hanrahan to me, "that Richard O'Meara did not pray for grace. For Michael says, if grace be prayed for, grace will be given. An' I agree with Michael," added Mary.

I will close this short Chapter by saying, that the creed of Michael and Mary is my creed also.

CHAPTER XX.

ANOTHER SHORT CHAPTER. MICHAEL'S SIMILE OF THE BLUE-BOTTLE, AND MICHAEL'S IMITATION OF FATHER MATHEW.

It is not my intention to follow Richard O'Meara step by step as he was led on by the Achates of "The Town of the Cascades." From the lengthened details given me by Michael and Mary, and derived from other sources too, I will select a few remarkable occurrences that stand prominently forward.

For a time Richard O'Meara fulfilled the promise he had made to Michael. He remained at home in the evenings, and did not visit the town, and he endeavoured to fix himself steadily to business. He was moderate too in his libations, and forced himself

to be content with the "allowance," as Michael named it, put into the decanter each evening.

But the cheerful buoyancy of his spirits was damped by the constraint to which he endeavoured to submit. Gradually his efforts relaxed, and on—on he went again in his ruinous progress.

"He reminded me at that time," said Michael, "of a big blue fly that's caught in a spider's web. He wrangled hard to get free, and then he stopped in his wrangling. And then he wrangled again, and stopped again;—and stopped, and wrangled, and stopped, and wrangled. Every time he stopped nd began again, his fluttering and kicking and buzzing was weaker, and weaker,—until he gave up entirely. And if you will only say to yourself that the crawling, ill-looking spider that crept out and dragged him away was the evil sperrit that pours out the liquor for people, you'll have exactly my notion of the poor fellow's fate.

"You may take my word for it," Michael continued when he had paused after the sententious delivery of his apt, though not elegant simile—

"You may take my word for it, that what I heard Father Mathew saying (the Heavens be his bed) in the chapel beyond, is all as one as gospel thruth."

Here Michael threw himself into an oratorical attitude, and modified his features to represent Father Mathew's peculiar bland benevolence of smile. It was a caricature likeness he produced no doubt, yet Michael's face was benevolent in its way. And although no two faces could be more dissimilar than those of Michael Hanrahan and the apostle of temperance,—the former being remarkable for nondescript irregularity, the other for classic contour,—there was as near an approach to likeness of expression as could be effected. Michael's style bore evidence that his was a very free translation of the original text. As it was, I quote verbatim.

"My dear friends" (says Father Mathew), "there is nothing at all at all to stand for the poor sowl, God help it, that's given to the liquor, but to put the sign of the cross on its forehead, as a threshold betwixt itself and the Devil,—a threshold across which the ould lad darn't put his hoof, or so

much as the tip of his claw. And then let it turn its back upon the dhrink teetumtotally, and never let it scald its tongue again."

Which, to my mind, is good, sound doctrine, however oddly paraphrased by Michael Hanrahan.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE WIDOW-WOMAN'S PLACE OF "ENTERTAINMENT."

On a certain evening, at the hour when night had begun to unfold her pall, and was gradually enveloping objects beneath its screen, the western edge thereof being gilt by the latest touch of the retiring sun, the Half-pay issued from his little shabby-genteel house, looked around him for a moment, sniffed the pleasant breeze with a relish, and then stumped down the descent towards the river.

Briskly and hastily the Half-pay pushed across the bridge. From the celerity and liveliness of his motions one would infer that he was bent on some important business; and I have full reason for

asserting that the interior merriment of which I have before spoken, circulated freely between his firmly closed lips and teeth,—significant that the object in view was "apples and nuts to him."

Over the bridge he hastened, looking intently before him, glancing neither to the right nor left, not even beguiled into taking a passing view of the cascades. They might tumble upward for all he cared just then.

Off the bridge, into the main street he went. Across the street he hurried, and with a lively hop, and a flourish of his cudgel, he ascended a step at the threshold of a shop directly fronting him, and there entered. All alive and mettlesome he seemed to be.

Through the well-burnished windows of this shop, and so disposed on a shelf or counter within as to be seen at a glance, one caught sight of a pyramid of loaves of bread. Close to the bread was a cheese, with a wedge-shaped cut therein, proving the interior to be rich and crumbling. And on this cheese lay the instrument with which the incision

had been made, ready to say, "Cut and come again" when required.

In close neighbourhood with the cheese was a juicy round of beef; a great carving knife lay thereon, both able and willing, if set to work, to slice away manfully. Close by this again, was a boiled ham, partially incised, as the cheese was, and most enticing, to judge by the eye,—the lean so red and crisp, the fat so blanched and clarified. And there was a flitch of bacon, in a sitting posture, that looked down, one would think, affectionately on the partly excavated ham. Very probably this flitch of bacon, and its neighbour the ham, had, not very long ago, been united portions of some animal, —whilom lord and master of the cabin he dwelt in, little imagining the purpose for which he was so pampered and caressed, so well cared and housed.

Then there was a large wooden bowl to be seen, heaped up with eggs, beyond water-measure: there was a dish choke-full of small "prints of butter:" and there was also a large crock of the same edible pickled, the mouth of the crock turned streetwards

with a grooved wooden spatula plunged therein, prepared for action.

Somewhat in the rear of this surpassing fare, and modestly disclaiming "pride of place," stood a singed pig's head with very erect ears, and close thereto a heap of dingy-looking pigs' "pettitoes"—or "crubeens," in local parlance.

Immediately in contact with the window-panes was a castle formed of scalloped-edged biscuits Hanging up, so as to catch the eye at once; there was a bundle of clay pipes, the bowls capped with tin covers, and these chained to the pipe-shanks. And there were "doodeens" manufactured by an artist in that line living in "The Town of the Cascades," these deserving special description. The heads of the "doodeens" then, were of mahogany, the bowls of tin, and the shanks of sweet woodbine. They were profusely ornamented with copper wire, and amateurs in smoking have told me that such doodeens surpass the costliest meerschaums.

As a final portion of the exhibition in the window, I have to notice six sad-looking pickled

herrings, erect, but leaning against the glass for support, and standing on the apex of their snouts. Were these lachrymose pickled herrings so placed for the purpose of contrasting with the more generous fare on view at the same time? So I at first supposed, but I was mistaken.

Over the door of this well-provisioned establishment was a sign-board bearing one significant word:—

"ENTERTAINMENT,"

—in large white letters on a black ground.

The well-cooked beefsteak or mutton-chop, with ceteras, and followed by bottled ale and whisky punch, could be very cosily served up in the little overfurnished, carpeted room up-stairs.

Rasher-and-egg eaters, or eaters of eggs alone, were generally satisfied to regale themselves at a table on which the kitchen fire shed its genial glow. While the bread and cheese and butter consumers, or the diners on a meagre pickled herring, were content with a seat in the common tap-room.

For one moment or so I must be allowed to take

a glance at the interior of the shop belonging to the house of "Entertainment."

At a few feet from the termination of the counter, which ran from the window almost to the wall opposite, an upright partition of boards projected, and this formed a screen, behind which the stealthy dram-drinker who had not "come to make a sitting of it," might "turn up his little finger" while hastily tossing off his glass of liquor. The counter was to the right as you entered the shop; to the left there were three capacious puncheons, light blue in colour, and marked No. 1, No. 2, No. 3; the number signifying a gradation of merit in the contents. On shelves behind the counter were ranged many light blue kegs. And below these, and opposite the screen, stood, each in a cell of its own, six squat, unusually corpulent, Dutch-built bottles.

These bottles were tightly corked, but through the cork of each a strong whipcord passed, which was fastened firmly round the bottle's neck. A smart pull at the string, and out came the cork in a jiffy, safely dangling, while the contents gurgled

forth. The familiars of the convenient screen averred, that all and every of the black bottles could speak one word of the Irish language as plainly as if they "had it in their throttles."

At the instant when the cork was snatched from the orifice it filled, and the neck of the bottle bent to the glass, the well-understood word "*Dhuich!*" was heard, plain as it could be uttered. And the translated meaning of the word "*Dhuich!*" is "drink!" used by the bottles in the imperative mood.

The willing obeyers of the mandate so enunciated, further affirmed, that each individual bottle issued its command in a tone peculiarly its own. Every hider behind the screen cultivated an intimacy with one or other of the bottles in preference to the rest. He could therefore decide, without probability of error, if the "*Dhuich!*" had come from his own favourite. He could not be imposed on by a stranger's voice, or beguiled to stimulate his palate with any but its accustomed stimulant.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE "LONE ROOM."

When the Half-pay had hopped into the house of "Entertainment," he performed an odd pirouette with his composite leg, punched it down thrice, as though to say emphatically, "We have arrived, my lad!" And then he brought his cudgel to present arms while he placed the edge of his left hand above the rim of his beaver. This accolade was given to a buxom, comely woman, who stood behind the counter. This woman might be forty, or thereabouts. She was Dutch-built, like her bottles; her eye was blue (sky-blue eyes are very general in and about "The Town of the Cascades");—no doubt but these blue-eyes had emitted ethereal rays when

their owner was in her maiden prime;—their expression even now was not quite lost, but there was shrewdness superadded. Her plump cheeks were rosy; their girlish peachiness had hardened though; her hair was glistening auburn (such is also very general in the locality);—it was carefully curled about her face. She wore a gown of some dark colour; a checked apron "from the fold" guarded this to the front; a many-coloured silk kerchief enveloped her bust; and she wore a cap with pink strings and a pink bow above the left ear. It was not a widow's cap—no, no; it was a kind of compromise cap, with quilling and lace in great abundance; and this compromise cap was very becoming, the pink strings and bows taking from it all character of sombreness.

This tidy, pleasant-looking—but, at the same time "not-to-be-caught-with-chaff" person, was the "widow-woman" of the "Town of the Cascades"—the Half-pay's widow-woman especially, as the reader will doubtless remember.

When the Half-pay saluted his old nurse, the

widow-woman held a small wooden instrument, with a slender neatly-turned handle, and an ornamental knob at the end,—not unlike, in fact, a royal sceptre as to shape and size. This sceptre was technically called a "muller," and was used by the widow-woman to bruise the sugar against the bottom of the glass when she brewed a "tumbler of punch." The expertness with which she twirled this muller between her fingers, proved indeed that "practice makes perfect." It is certain that with it she could effect a thorough amalgamation of sugar and water in a battery of twelve or more "tumblers" placed in a row, in a twentieth of the time the same process would have demanded through the every-day agency of spoon or ladle. Scientific preparers of solutions would do well to take a hint from the widow-woman's muller. It may give them a wrinkle worth knowing.

In answer to the Half-pay's salute, the comely widow-woman jerked the handle of her muller between the first and second fingers of her right

hand, and twirling it upwards, placed it cross-wise above the jaunty pink bow that so expressively removed all idea of pining or sadness from the cap. Her look into the Half-pay's eyes was steady and unflinching as his own, but with her there was a jocularity in the eyes, and about the mouth, that imparted a piquancy to her return of the veteran's symbolic gallantry.

The Half-pay, after a due pause, lowered his cudgel and placed it, ever so gently, on the widow-woman's shoulder, while she also lowered her muller, brought its knob in contact with the counter, and leaned her palm on it.

"Any—one?" the Half-pay asked, jerking his head towards the end of the shop.

The widow-woman separated the fingers of her left hand and held four of them up to view. At the same time she bent the first joint of her thumb, and protruded the ball thereof, so as to produce an easily appreciable representation of a duck. She touched each upright finger separately, and then she

tapped the duck's head, and allowed the muller to rest upon it.

"Not come yet. Will *you*, Curnel?"

The Half-pay paused a moment, and his riveted look at her was not without humour. But you should have studied his face somewhat to discover it.

"I will."

"Then he's welcome. If not, home again in full trot," said the widow-woman.

Lest those who read this narrative should be perplexed by the conversation held partly in dumb show between the hostess of the house of "Entertainment" and her friend the Half-pay, I think a translation of her hieroglyphics necessary. When she touched her four upright fingers with her muller, she replied to the query "Any—one?" by telling the querist that four of his usual evening companions had reached the place of rendezvous. The duck formed by the contortion of her thumb, typified our acquaintance, Tom O'Loughlin, "the decayed gentleman." The symbol was not strictly accurate,

to be sure; neither are those discovered on the walls of the pyramids, by the bedusted rummagers therein. There is a hard strain needed at times by the learned explorers, to bring the buckle and tongue of an interpretation in contact. And the widow-woman's symbol of Tom O'Loughlin was as apt as many.

"Tom O'Loughlin," she reasoned, "drinks as often as a duck. He eats, to be sure,—so do ducks —but with every morsel he must have a drink, just as ducks feed. His element is the fluid, not the solid, therefore when my thumb is modelled to represent a duck, it represents Tom O'Loughlin. It will be seen that the meaning of the widow-woman was evident to the Half-pay. The query verbally propounded while she held her muller on the duck's head, and thoroughly understood by the Half-pay, was,—

"Will *you* pay for the duck's drink, Curnel?"

The assent given by the Half-pay insured Tom O'Loughlin's admission, his score being already out of all proportion with his ability to expunge. For a

long time Tom had been inadmissible, except under the auspices of a guarantee. If such were not to be found, the poor droughty Tom should waddle out of the shop, and creep back to his miserable little house to spend the hours intended by him to be added to the day, in solitary, pining thirstiness.

When the Half-pay had notified his intentions to be answerable for the "duck's" reckoning of the night, he punched off merrily in the direction towards which he had nodded.

At the end of the counter there was a side-door, the latch of which he raised, and descended three steps into a narrow, tortuous passage. This passage was dimly lighted by candles fixed in sconces here and there, to the walls. But the "darkness visible" of the crooked entry was sufficient for the Half-pay; he could have explored it blindfold, so often had he at nightfall traced its ups and downs, its twists and turns.

Finally he reached a door, which he opened by pressing a latch, and entered an apartment a good

way to the rear of the generally known portion of the house of "Entertainment." Here the Bacchanalians of the "Town of the Cascades," that is, of a certain grade, might congregate beyond the ken of prying Cynicism. Here the "honest, hearty, pleasant fellows," as they dubbed themselves, might pour their libations *ad libitum*, no one the wiser except the widow-woman and her "coy maiden." And the boisterousness that for the most part distinguished the prolonged orgies of this properly designated "lone room" might rise to any pitch of uproariousness, unheard by the passers in the street, or by the inhabitants of the neighbouring houses.

The "lone room" was homely in decoration and furniture. A plain deal table occupied the centre, with deal forms running parallel thereto on both sides, and a chair at either end. There was no fireplace; perhaps the deficiency was not without a purpose. On cold winter nights, heat was supplied internally by means of steaming alcoholic drink; the colder the weather, the greater the quantity required to raise the temperature of the guests. On

summer evenings, the cool atmosphere of the "lone room" absorbed the excess of caloric.

The whitewashed walls were relieved from their blankness by six prints, in frames covered with shining metal, imitative of gilding. These had been purchased by the widow-woman from a travelling pedlar, while the "lone room" was in process of remodelling. Glaring in colour the prints were, and just because they flashed gaudily upon the eye, admirably adapted, in the purchaser's estimation, to adorn the new apartment. Their fitness so far being admitted, their appropriateness in all other respects must be denied.

The three pendants against the right-hand wall, that is to the right as the Half-pay hopped in, were three saints,—not portraits, I venture to affirm, for they were scowling, sinister-looking saints. The three to the left were illustrative of the Scripture parable of the Prodigal Son. The saints were respectively attired in robes of the brightest red, the brightest blue, and the brightest yellow. The artist's idea seemed to be that saints should be

clothed in the most brilliant hues of the rainbow, referable, perhaps, to their state of beatitude. So far, his idea was carried out; in other respects I must say he failed to impart even a remote expression of sanctity—rather the contrary, I regret to admit.

The first of the series to the left, commemorative of the progress of the Prodigal Son, calls for a particular description, and which will give an idea of the others.

The youth was about to leave the paternal roof. The father was seated in a gorgeously carpeted room hung with family pictures in massive frames. There was a scarlet covered *settee*, not a downright modern lounger. The window-hangings were of brilliant red, fringed and tasselled. In bookcases were richly bound books, and amongst them, prominently in view, were the "Encyclopædia Britannica" in many volumes, the "Arabian Nights," "Sir Charles Grandison," and "The Sportsman's Dictionary." Altogether, the family pictures, the character of the furniture, etc., led the observer to understand that he looked into the apartment of an

English country gentleman of wealth and station, and the selection of the books notified that he was also a man of erudite habits becoming his years and position.

Early in the day the young adventurer was about to depart. This was evident from the fact of the father being yet in dishabille. He had not removed his elaborately figured dressing-gown; his many-buckled wig, indeed, was on his head, with the black silk appendage therefrom called a bag; his nether-man was clothed in tight-fitting pantaloons, and he wore red morocco slippers without heels. The prodigal's father, so depicted, was a stately, sage-looking English gentleman of sixty years back.

He sat at a small, diagonal table supported by a single pedestal. On this table a goodly pyramid of gold pieces was heaped up, and there was no doubt about their being, all of them, genuine British guineas, not long, apparently, from the mint,—certainly not in circulation at the commencement of the Christian era. These guineas had just been

counted down by the affluent head of the house, his fingers were in contact with the edge of the heap, and he was looking up soberly, and somewhat reprovingly at his son.

The youth stood close by the diagonal table, and his eyes were fixed longingly on the glittering portion he was about to receive. He was fully equipped for his journey, ready to pop into the saddle. He was bareheaded, as he should be in his father's presence; his hair, well powdered and pomatumed, was frizzed and buckled from his ears to his forehead, while a taper queue hung between his shoulders. His coat was of bright blue, ornamented down the front with two rows of gilt buttons; pantaloons must have been in vogue when the illustration was designed, for the young adventurer wore those nether garments, of a very positive yellow, in tasteful contrast with his scarlet waistcoat. A long watch-chain, with massive seals thereto, hung down his thigh, and on his legs were hessian-boots, with tassels to the front reaching half-way to the insteps. On his heels were crane-necked silver spurs; in his

left hand was a silver-mounted riding-whip, and in his right, a smart, three-cocked hat, ready to be placed on his bepowdered head as soon as the pyramid of guineas on the table should have been handed over to him.

Whether these delineations deserved commendation or not, I must give my opinion again that the saints had no business whatever in the widow-woman's "lone room." And I will say that the moral inculcated by the parable was little heeded by its frequenters. Night after night the saints looked on perforce at conduct the reverse of saintlike. While the warning conveyed in the Scripture lesson was altogether thrown away on "the gay, honest, hearty fellows" who met there.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A "NIGHT OF IT."

When the Half-pay entered the "lone room," as the widow-woman's muller and fingers had intimated, four of its frequenters had already arrived.

Ned Culkin the gauger was there. Ned was always the first to come and the last to leave. By his own account, he was "none of your pippin-squeezing fellows" that would flinch from their glass. No, he was not the lad to bring down on his head the malediction—by whom propounded, I cannot say,—"Cursed be he who leaves his liquor behind him." And Ned Culkin's early-day leaden eyes were sparkling; the round face that in the

morning had been pale and flabby, was rubicund and plump; the lips that had been shrivelled parchment were smooth and ruddy; his "shivering of cold" was past for the time; in fact, Ned was "himself again," "brisk as a bee, light as a fairy!"

Nick Mahaffy was there, the pompous little draper and silk-mercer, who always stooped when entering the chapel, to avoid knocking his head against the door-post, many feet above it.

Toby Purcell, the landlord of the "McMahon Arms," was there. Toby Purcell often stole away from his own more pretentious establishment to indulge in the unobserved jovialities of the "lone room."

Paddy Dreelan, grocer and spirit-dealer, was there. Wherever Mr. Nick Mahaffy went, Paddy Dreelan was ambitious to be his satellite.

But neither Nick Mahaffy, nor Toby Purcell, nor yet the modest Paddy Dreelan, were deep-goers. Whenever they stole into the "lone room" they entered it at a pretty early hour, and retired betimes.

Ned Culkin stood up and held his glass high; the others followed his example, and the Colonel's health was toasted energetically. The complimented man saluted the shoulders of Nick Mahaffy and Toby Purcell with a hearty bang in passing; shook hands across the table with Paddy Dreeling and Ned Culkin, and took his usual place near the head of the table. Even before he was seated the widow-woman's waitress, a pleasant-looking girl, had placed a steaming tumbler where she knew her most cherished guest always took his seat.

"Health!" burst forth the Half-pay, and he waved his glass round, then took a deep draught, and looked at his compeers with great intensity.

Shortly after the Half-pay had left the widow-woman's shop on his way to the "lone room," in crept the poor "duck," rubbing his hands and cringing.

"I hope I see you quite well, Mrs. Morrissy?" he said, curving his features to their most abject smile.

"Cry success to the Curnel, my poor fellow;"

and the widow-woman twirled her muller in the direction of the side-door.

"May the Curnel's pocket never be—"

"Without a cross to keep the man with the horny toes out of it! Eh, Tom?" The muller again pointed out "the way he should go," and Tom O'Loughlin passed on to his night's revel.

One by one others made their appearance. No more than one at a time ever entered the house of "Entertainment." Had its frequenters come in a flock, or even in pairs, it would have been noticed. A sudden dart into the shop when no eye was observing; no pause therein—quick, quick, out of view behind the screen, and in through the winding passage. This was the general mode of entrance to the privacy of the "lone room."—A first-rate speculation on the part of the widow-woman was this "lone room." Good reason had she to congratulate herself on her perception of the phase of human frailty that makes people set a value on hidden pleasures, and think lightly of secret peccadillos. Half an hour after the arrival of the Half-pay, there were not less

than a dozen resolute boozers seated within view of the saints of the "lone room," and setting at nought the lesson of the Prodigal Son.

The Dutch-built black-bottles had scarcely reposed for an instant at a time in their cells behind the shop-counter. They had shouted "*dhuich* ! *dhuich* !" in their several tones, almost without cessation. The widow-woman's muller had been diving to the bottoms of tumblers with an alertness and good-will that proved it to be a muller thoroughly up to its business, and delighting in the discharge of its duty. The well-looking waitress had been coming and going between the "lone room" and the muller "at full trot." Night had been for an hour or more acting as the widow-woman's fast friend, by folding in her thickest mantle such visitors as would not have it known that they were hurrying, under favour of the concealment, to mix in the covert indulgence afforded by the widow-woman's "Entertainment."

At this period a late comer made his appearance. He entered the shop with a contracted brow and an ill-tempered compression of the lips. The widow-

woman saluted him with a flourish of her muller, or sceptre, above her cap, and her most insinuating smile bade him welcome as she addressed him.

"Merry be your heart, Masther Dick O'Meara!"

Richard O'Meara took little notice of her blandishments. He hastened through the side-door, along the passage, and into the "lone room."

Close at Richard O'Meara's heels was his noble dog, Teague. On ordinary, daylight excursions, Teague would precede his master, with chest erect, and elevated snout, and smiling face. Now, with drooping tail, and hanging head, and downcast eyes, he followed in the rear.

Did Teague then, disapprove of this night's visit to the house of "Entertainment?" Was his companionship in discharge of a stern, unpleasant duty, rather than an accompaniment from choice? Was it a proof of the devotion that will conquer repugnance sooner than abandon the object of affection? It was even so.

Honest Teague had been in the "lone room" before, and his high nature had revolted at the part he had

been compelled to take in the prevailing intemperance around him. He remembered with disgust what had passed; he would not again have accompanied his master, did he not consider his services might be needed. It was Teague's conviction that his guardianship was requisite.

Richard O'Meara, as I have said, entered the widow-woman's shop with a contracted brow and a surly compression of the lips.

He had left home to escape his causes for self-accusation. There, his wife's pale face, struggling to disguise its terror under a sickly feint of smiling eagerness, had been a reproach to him. Michael Hanrahan's cheerless looks of disapproval had been a reproach to him. His eldest boy's apprehensive avoidance had been a reproach to him. The shrinking of his younger child from his loud voice, and his roughness, had been a reproach to him. Mary's thin artifice to avoid intrusting the baby but lately born to his arms, had been a reproach to him.

A dogged, morose resentment towards the home accusers took possession of him. And in this mood,

his eye scowling, and his chest heaving with pent-up anger, he had sprung from his seat, and had left the place of accusation to seek forgetfulness in the noisy and senseless fellowship of the "lone room."

"Go with him, and take care of him, good dog," said Michael Hanrahan, stooping to Teague's ear and whispering therein.

Teague looked into his adviser's sorrowful eyes, and understood him.

So it was that Richard O'Meara and his dog Teague, the one in surly humour, the other in discharge of an unpleasant duty, entered the widow-woman's shop.

CHAPTER XXIV.

PLEASANT, HEARTY FELLOWSHIP.

HERE was a hubbub of voices filling the apartment as Richard O'Meara raised the latch of the "lone room."

The pompous Nick Mahaffy was "insisting" on something most dictatorially, and at the highest pitch of his voice. Toby Purcell, in a mellow bass, with a waggish smile playing round his mouth, was steadily eliciting Nick Mahaffy's dictatorship. Paddy Dreelan was boisterous on Nick Mahaffy's side of the question. (By-the-way, Paddy Dreelan had been, as Toby Purcell insinuated, busy looking at somebody's tumbler going to his, Paddy's mouth.) Ned Culkin the gauger, in a brazen, harsh voice,

was pert and snappish with every one. Tom O'Loughlin was loud in his approval of everything that everybody said. Others, in twos and threes, were eagerly discussing isolated topics, all talking loud, as needs must, if they wished their nearest neighbours to comprehend the gist of their discourse. On one point there was unanimity; all were devotedly imbibing the widow-woman's "liqueur de contradiction," as I have heard whisky-punch not unaptly designated.*

The only person in the "lone room" not vociferating was our friend the Half-pay, or Colonel. He still sat where he had first fixed himself, to all appearance unchanged and unchangeable. His stern look was

* The term "liqueur de contradiction" was applied, I have been told, by some astonished Frenchman to Ireland's national beverage, on first beholding the admixture of ingredients, and further when he witnessed its effect on those who drank it. "There was," he said, "whisky to make it strong, and water to make it weak: there was sugar to make it sweet, and lemon to make it sour." So far it was certainly a "liqueur de contradiction." And as to its effects on the drinkers it was also a "liqueur de contradiction," inasmuch as no two persons were found to be of one mind after indulgence in it.

riveted, now on one, now on another; occasionally a single "Hah!" escaped him,—quite sufficient, the brief monosyllabic laugh, to testify that the din was gratifying to him.

All at once the Half-pay sprang up to his full height. His glass was elevated above his head; his jaws were snapped asunder, and he vociferated the single word "Welcome!" with such stentorian force of lungs that it was heard above the uproar. Every look was instantly directed to the point indicated by the exclaimant's cudgel, and every "gay honest fellow" was on his feet promptly.

"Health!" the Half-pay bellowed, and he flourished his glass with one hand, and his cudgel with the other.

"Mr. Richard O'Meara's health and hearty welcome!" sang out Tom O'Loughlin. And "Mr. O'Meara's health and welcome," went from mouth to mouth.

Tom O'Loughlin threw himself backward on his seat, thereby protruding his chest so as to give a purchase, as it were, to his lungs, and his "Hip,

hip, hurra!" rang through the room as shrilly as if it were a trumpet-note sounded in the din of battle.

Tom O'Loughlin was celebrated far and near for his effective leadership whenever "Hip, hip, hurra!" was to be sung out. It was a small ambition, but it was an ambition with Tom O'Loughlin to be so distinguished. Every one to his vocation!

So Tom O'Loughlin took upon himself on the present occasion (no one better fitted) to act as fugleman of the "lone room." He waved his glass backward and forward before his face, swaying his person with the motion as he sang out, with a brazen distinctness:—

"For he's a right good fellow!
For he's a right good fellow!
For he's a right good fel-l-o—w!
Which nobody can deny:
Which nobody can deny,
Which nobody can deny—
For he's a right good fellow!
Which nobody can deny.
Hip! hip!—hurra!——hurra!——hurra!"

This standard ditty, certainly not distinguished

for its lyric excellence, was joined in by the entire assemblage of the "lone room," the Half-pay excepted, who contented himself with bellowing out the final syllable of each line. Tom O'Loughlin was the leader of the strain throughout. Could the saints on the wall have escaped from their frames, off out of hearing they would have raced, to a dead certainty, so stunning was the discord.

Yet when the finishing "Hip, hip, hurra!" had been shouted, and that every "right good fellow" had thrown back his head, gazed at the ceiling, and emptied his glass, neighbour smiled blandly upon neighbour, each congratulating the other on the musical feat they had accomplished.

Tom O'Loughlin, the fugleman, banged his empty glass down upon the table as he resumed his seat. Every "right good fellow" banged down his at the same moment, and Ned Culkin, protruding his lips, emitted a peculiar, quivering scream that rang shrill and piercing, not only through the "lone room," but also up the passage and into the shop. Almost instantly the Hebe of the establishment appeared.

She pounced on the drained measures with marvellous celerity, they were all on her tray in the twinkling of an eye, and away she went. Many seconds did not elapse until they were ranged single file in front of the widow-woman. In went sugar and water with magical despatch ;—pop, pop! in dived the muller. "*Dhuich*, *dhuich*, *dhuich!*" screamed and shouted the black bottles. Widow-woman, Hebe, muller, and black bottles were all so active and willing in their several vocations, that before the slightest note of impatience could escape the "right good fellows," a replenished, steaming jorum was at every man's right hand.

Richard O'Meara's knotted brow uncoiled; his eyes flashed with excitement, and an expression of reckless abandonment replaced the surly expression of his lips.

He put on a frolicksome, devil-may-carish air. (No less objectionable term would be so descriptive of his manner.) He threw himself into an exaggerated rhetorical attitude; with sonorous voice and theatrical action he addressed his expectant audience.

"'Friends, countrymen, and lovers—

"'Most potent, grave, and reverend seniors,' which description of the immortal poet, it must be admitted, suits you to a T—rhyme and reason together, you see. I am curved double, as you may perceive; I cannot stand erect before you, so oppressed and weighed down am I by the magnitude of the obligation you have imposed upon me. So overcome am I by the enthusiastic, the vociferous, the obstreperous cordiality of your welcome that——"

"Hear, hear, hear!" fugled Tom O'Loughlin, shrill as a whistle.

"Hear, hear!" Toby Purcell added, in his pleasant, mellow bass. Toby's "hear!" was an utterance of enjoyment, Tom O'Loughlin's of adulation.

"Hear!" bellowed the Half-pay. And the cry was taken up and shouted bravely.

"Grand!" suggested Nick Mahaffy to Paddy Dreelan, across the table.

"Grand—grand entirely," assented Paddy, obsequiously.

"Silence, silence, and be damned to the whole of ye!" barked forth Ned Culkin. "You're stopping the speech. Go on, my worthy, go on!"

"In vain have I paused," resumed the mocking orator, "for words—whereby—to—express—the—the—agonizing poignancy—of—my—feelings—at—this—moment——"

What change was it that came over Richard O'Meara? Was the sinking of the voice to a plaintive quavering, affected or real? Was the choking spasm in the throat assumed only? Was that sudden pause, as if the words would not come upwards, no more than acting? Was that harassing expression of face counterfeited? Was the watery film in the eye brought there artificially? Was that resounding blow upon the chest inflicted for effect alone?

No—no. I have it from Toby Purcell, the only person present perhaps who perceived the change, that he looked with surprise at Richard O'Meara's altered countenance. And he understood on the instant that the words of the sentence, begun in

mockery, had brought suddenly to the speaker's mind the recollection of all he had forfeited, and the degradation to which he had descended; that the subsidence of the voice, the struggle for utterance, the tears ready to overflow the eyes, and the smiting of the chest were reality, not acting.

With a violent start, as if rushing from the presence of an accuser, Richard O'Meara passed his hand hurriedly across his forehead and eyes. And then his mask of bravadoing jocularity was again put on.

"Come, my jolly companions, every one," he cried out; "our honest, hearty Colonel did not exhaust the vocabulary when prefacing my health. One word as if shot out of a musket was sufficient for his purpose, and I will detain you no longer from the lethean draught that changes the leaden eye of grief to sparkling diamonds. If this glass—" and he held it forth at arm's length—"were a well, sixty feet to the bottom, and filled with hot and strong whisky-punch, I'd drink it every drop to the good health of every pleasant fellow I see around

me. Good health, merry and jolly days and nights to all of us. We'll drive dull care away, boys; we'll tickle the ribs of mirth until he laughs lustily, and we'll chorus him as he laughs,—upon my soul we will, boys!"

And Richard O'Meara drained his draught of lethe amid the clamorous approval of the "lone room," Ned Culkin's peculiar scream piercing through the din.

"Gentlemen all," said Tom O'Loughlin, passing his hands through each other smoothly, speaking softly and insinuatingly, and grinning to the corners of his eyes—"I'm going to say what I know you'd like, and it is this: I propose that Richard O'Meara, Esquire, of Cascade Cottage, be our chairman of the night."

"Hear!" exploded the Half-pay; and there was a general noisy assent.

"So be it, my merry men all, so be it. I accept at once the hilarious duties of your chairman. *Nolo episcopari* is out of place here. And so to it we go."

With a rakish swagger of manner he seated himself at the head of the table.

"Hallo! the vice-chair is vacant, I see. Tom O'Loughlin, my hearty thorough-goer, I appoint you as my viceroy. A veteran devotee you are, Tom O'Loughlin, to our Irish Bacchus—a heartier fellow, by long odds, our Hibernian Bacchus, than he of the ancients. As his veteran, devotee, friend, Tom, I place you in the vice-regal chair."

Tom O'Loughlin assumed his station with right good will.

"And now, my jovial lads, you have made me king of the Gregory, as we used to say at school. And I don't intend to be your king Log, let me tell you. I will begin my rule by issuing a decree. In the first place, we'll make a night of it."

"Hear!" burst from the Half-pay.

"Hear, hear!" screamed the Vice-chair.

Ned Culkin gave his curious scream, and there was a boisterous assent so far.

"Every jolly fellow here present must drink fair. No heel-taps or sky-lights allowed. When your

king of the Gregory presents the bottom of his tumbler to the zenith, all must follow suit, and when a fresh round appears, they must be brimmers, every glass. No one must quit the room to-night in an erect position—on the leaf of the hat is the only mode of exit permissible. Such is my decree; let no man disobey me at his peril."

"What's the punishment against rebels, Mr. Chair?" asked Toby Purcell.

"The slinker from the ordinance must drink an extra tumbler—or the Vice-chair or Ned Culkin must drink it for him."

"Hear, hear!" assented Tom O'Loughlin.

"Ned Culkin is able and willing," agreed the gauger.

"We'll begin the business of the night on fair terms," said the Chairman. "Every tumbler up. Vice-chair, attend to your duty."

"All primed and loaded" reported the Vice-chair.

"Then, ready,—present,—fire!"

The commander put his glass to his lips, and emptied it to the bottom.

"Ground arms!"

Following the example of the chairman, each tumbler was banged against the table, mouth downwards.

"Come, Hebe!" and the king of the Gregory addressed the watchful waitress. "Another round, hot, strong, and sweet."

The empty vessels were away and back again in a twinkling.

"Now, boys, we start on equal terms. And this, our ammunition, must not lose strength by lying over. I'll give a toast. I'll propose the health—

——Of as honest a soul,
As ever drank liquor or fathomed a bowl.

A wrong version of the old song I'm giving you, but 'twill do. You must take a deep draught to the health of one who is like an old-times drama —or like Byron's Cain—'a Mystery.' Not one can tell who he is or whence he came."

"Hear!" interrupted the Half-pay, explosively.

"But this we know, every one of us, that after

a way of his own 'he is a right good fellow,' and that you could not prevail on him to throw a stone at a bottle of whisky——"

"Hear!" broke in the Half-pay, as suddenly and as loudly as before.

"Come, boys, our Colonel's health. On your legs—nine times nine—"

All stood up instantly. Glasses were waved, and the "hip—hurra" was deafening. And the standard ditty "He is a right good fellow," was chanted.

There was no personation of bashfulness by the Half-pay. He stamped his cudgel, he stamped his leg against the floor, and his "hip—hurra!" was even more distinct than that of the vice-chairman. He remained standing when all the others had resumed their seats. He raised his cudgel aloft, and banged it down on the chairman's shoulder with such force as to make the recipient of the blow wince.

"Health!" he announced, and the same scene was repeated as before.

"And now, my hearties," flourished the "Chair,"

as for brevity and good-fellowship he was called, "let the toast and the glass keep going merrily. 'Scrape me, and I'll scrape you,' shall be the order of the night. Let one propose the health of some-one, and that some-one return the compliment, and so keep the ball a-going. Toby Purcell, send it aloft."

"Never say no, Mr. Chair," assented Toby; and in his own rotund, plausible way, he brought the pretensions of the "Vice-chair" before the meeting.

In town or country there wasn't a more loyal disciple of the Irish Bacchus—the god of punch—Toby made bold to call him. Tom had made an offering to the tipsy divinity of a nice little property; and at one time or another during his life, every bone in his body had been broken (except his neck-bone) in the service of the same god. As a further claim on the affections of those assembled, Toby Purcell related how Tom O'Loughlin's nose had been bent nearly in contact with his left cheek, by a blow from a fellow-worshipper. And how, after

having been worn thus awry for beyond a year, it had been put back into its original position, through the favour of the divinity so ardently followed, by another blow from another fellow-votary. Toby Purcell, in conclusion, appealed to Tom O'Loughlin himself as to the truth of his averments, and Tom pledged his word of honour as to the perfect accuracy of the statements. Toby Purcell therefore put it to the meeting—"Wasn't the poor fellow that suffered so much in so good a cause deserving to have his health drunk?"

The claim was fully admitted, and Tom's health was toasted with all the honours.

On the "scrape me and I'll scrape you" principle decreed by the Chair, Tom O'Loughlin proposed Toby Purcell's health. Tom's body was bent; his hands, as usual, revolved smoothly round each other; his voice was soft and insinuating, and his wrinkles curved into their most obsequious smile.

"Toby Purcell," he said, "was the best-natured, the most open-hearted, the most generous, the most hospitable gentleman, within the circle of the sea.

Toby was never without his pleasant joke, and his pleasant face. And his good tumbler of punch—ay, his tumbler after tumbler, was always given with a free hand—"

"To do you justice, Tom, you never refused one," interrupted the eulogized individual.

And Toby Purcell's health was received in the usual style.

With the Chairman's sanction Toby Purcell brought forward Ned Culkin's merits.

In his preface, Toby told the story of "the man up in the hills" who when dying, proclaimed triumphantly that he had killed a gauger, taking credit for this praiseworthy act, as sufficient atonement for all the sins of his life.

"But 'twould be the pity to take Ned Culkin's life. Ned could neither see nor smell a private still; and as for his dipping-rule, 'twas never known to find one half-glass in a puncheon of whisky more than the honest dealer said was there."

To prove, however, that if Ned Culkin did not increase the revenue in one way, he certainly did

in another. Toby stated—that during his lifetime Ned Culkin had consumed three hundred puncheons of whisky to his own share. The money value of which was, not to mind shillings and pence, nine thousand pounds, and that the contents of the three hundred puncheons would fill a lake sufficient to float a ship of eight hundred tons burthen!

Lest there might be a question as to the accuracy of these computations, Toby Purcell called on Paul Carey the land-surveyor, who was present, to witness in his favour. Paul Carey had assisted Toby in his calculations, and now, consulting his field-book, he confirmed the accuracy of the statement.

So Ned Culkin's health was given from the Chair, the honoured man screaming ecstatically at the recognition of his well-founded claims to distinction.

The proceedings went on briskly. Paddy Dreelan, usually modest and unobtrusive, sprang up in high excitement to propose the health of—

"The head man of the town, by Cork!—Mr. Nicholas Mahaffy."

Before the toast was offered for acceptance, Toby Purcell related what he had heard as fact, that Nick Mahaffy's yard measure was only thirty inches long. This calumny Nick Mahaffy repelled indignantly. Paddy Dreelan swore "by every cottoner in Cork" that the fellow who thus spoke of Mr. Mahaffy's yard measure was a backbiter and a lying thief. Whereupon a warm disputation went forward, all present taking sides on the question, some seriously, some jocularly. On the Chairman's suggestion, Toby Purcell admitted that he did not himself credit the report. And the health of "the head man of the town, by Cork!" was received in high glee, and with due celebration.

Nick Mahaffy brought forward the name of Paddy Dreelan—"a harmless, inoffensive creature, that came of a good owld stock of people—"

Here again Toby Purcell interfered. He remembered Paddy Dreelan "when he was a blind beggarman on Taghmon Bridge, in the County Wexford."

The joke was too manifest on this occasion to be taken in dudgeon, and—

"The health of the blind beggarman from Taghmon Bridge" was given from the Chair, and received with laughter and great "hip, hip, hurraing."

And so, one after another, they were all "right good fellows," every one of them.

Meantime the widow-woman's muller had had no rest. The black bottles were hoarse shouting "*dhuich!*" The waitress was obliged frequently to wipe her brow with her apron, so rapid had been her goings and comings.

It was evident the "Chair" had resolved that the departures from the "lone room" should be "on the leaf of the hat" in real earnest. The Chairman would dash on to insanity, and he would force all to accompany him. So the drinking was furious.

"There is one present," he shouted forth, "whose health has not yet been drunk. Come here, Teague, my boy—paws up here." He tapped the table, and—not a bound as usual—Teague

reluctantly obeyed. He put up one paw only ;— in obedience to more peremptory orders he put up the other. He looked reproachingly and affectionately into his master's eyes. It was with a scowl of dislike that he surveyed the rest of the company.

Mr. Chair eulogized his dog, and promised on his part that in a short time he too would become as good a fellow as any other fellow. Teague's health was received uproariously, and Teague's master compelled his dog to swallow a full glass of punch, pledging the health of the company. The poor dog, thus excited, proceeded to take his share in the vagaries going forward.

It was the remembrance of a like excess to which he had been on a former occasion forced to submit, that had saddened Teague to-night when he accompanied Richard O'Meara to the house of the widow-woman.

CHAPTER XXV.

FURTHER JOVIAL EFFECTS OF THE "CRUISKEEN LAWN."

THE inebriated Teague insisted on getting a seat at the table; he placed his paws thereon, looked round him giddily, and, whenever laughter or high talk went on, he barked, not in a surly way, but with a loud, tipsy bark.

Following the pledging of healths, and under orders from the Chair, came "a round of says and sentiments." For the information of those to whom this obsolete usage of good fellowship is unknown, I may explain, that these "says and sentiments" were scarcely ever original. They were "says and

sentiments" in vogue on such occasions, and were used as provocatives to further drinking.

"The land we live in," was one; "May the best of our days be to come," was another; "Erin go bragh!" another; "The Liberator!"—"Our absent friends!"—"May the old drunkards bury the young doctors!"—"May we never want a friend, or a bottle to give him!" and so on, winding up with, "Our noble selves!" coming with great *éclat* from the Chair.

"Hallo! Vice-chair!" shouted Dick O'Meara, "we'll have no flagging in our fun. Clear your whistle, and sing us a song. Let us have 'Ha, ha, ha!' Vice-chair."

"I'm all obedience, Mr. Chair," bowed and smiled Tom O'Loughlin.

"Hear!—Ha—ha—ha!" vociferated the Half-pay; and "Ha—ha—ha!" rang round the "lone room."

The song called for was Tom O'Loughlin's masterpiece. The "Ha, ha, ha!" was a laugh with which each verse terminated, and when chorused at an advanced stage of inebriety, it was

like demon-laughter. I give one verse as a specimen:—

"When my wife Chevaun goes to ride,
Two *suggaun* stirrups I'll provide;
And she'll trot on in pomp and pride,
And I will run by the *garraun's* side.
Sing—Tee-i-iddle-dee,
Tee-i-ee;
Ha!—ha!—ha!
Fo-de-too-rol-lee."

"A very good song, very well sung;
Jolly companions every one!"

—chaunted forth the Chairman, when Tom had given his final "Ha, ha, ha!" He was chorused in his chaunt, and then—

"The Vice-chair's health and song!" was toasted. This chaunt, with "the health and song" of the singer, was the Chairman's province at the finish of each strain, as the songs went round.

"I have a claim, Mr. Chair?" asked Tom O'Loughlin, insinuatingly.

"An undoubted claim you have, my hearty."

"Ha! Then I call on Mr. Toby Purcell for a song."

"A right good call, Vice-chair. Take a drink and lilt away, Toby."

"I wouldn't stop the night's enjoyment for the world," answered Toby. "I suppose, Mr. Chair, every one must contribute his share?"

"Every one, Toby,—or drink a glass of salt and water."

"Well, no salt and water for me, and so, here goes."

Toby's song was of very humble pretensions as a lyric, but to each verse there was a chorus of three lines, that, for the humour it contained, went far to redeem the jejune merit of the rest. The air was sad and slow, the chorus given by the singer in melancholy cadence, and chorused by the company in like mockery of seriousness. One verse will tell for all the others:—

"The poor trees would be leafless, no flowers would blow,
No grass in the meadows, no potatoes would grow;
And ourselves we would wither, and droop, and decay,
Unless showers were sent for to moisten the clay."

Chorus—"Sure we'll all be laid in the grave below,
So we'll drink to our memories *before we go*."

The morality inculcated in the chorus greatly impressed the "jolly companions."

Toby Purcell, as soon as his "health and song" had been "tossed off," as Ned Culkin called it, named Ned as the next vocalist.

Ned Culkin declared he could not sing with a heeltap of punch before him. He called on the Chair, out of regard to his intended "contribution of mirth," to order that all glasses should be emptied. This was a reasonable request, and it was ordered accordingly. Then fresh brimmers appeared. And then Ned Culkin began, in a mincing, cracked treble :—

"Listen !—listen !—listen !"

He paused, and turned his head from shoulder to shoulder, after the manner of a cock-sparrow.

"Sups apiece all round, boys, before we go farther ;" and he took "a sup" himself, and all "the boys" took "sups apiece" after him.

"Listen !—listen !—listen !"

Ned Culkin again sang. He paused as before, and turned his head as before.

"Sups apiece once more, boys," he repeated. And the "sups apiece" went round a second time.

And so Ned Culkin went on, with alternate "Listen!—listen!—listen!" and his "Sups apiece all round, boys," until it was accorded that he had sung—

"A very good song, very well sung,"

and that he was "a jolly companion" too.

There was one half humour, and one half pert mischief actuating Ned Culkin when he named the Half-pay as the singer to follow himself. Every one knew that such a continuous unloosing of his jaws by the Half-pay, as the emission of a song would necessitate, was with him a sheer impossibility. And neighbour nudged neighbour gleeishly, anticipating "the Curnel's" perplexity.

The Half-pay disappointed them all. He sprang up, he held forth his glass in his left hand, while pointing with his cudgel directly at that feature of Tom O'Loughlin's face, which had, according to Toby Purcell's statement, undergone such unheard-of vicissitudes,—

"Ha!—ha!—ha!"—he snapped forth.

"Fol-de-too-rall-loo," chimed in the Vice-chair.

And the Half-pay resumed his seat as suddenly as he had risen. He looked from face to face, as if he would transfix his companions by his glance, and, undetected by any one present, the silent laughter circulated along his teeth, inside his re-clasped lips.

"Song!" and the Half-pay touched the shoulders of the Chairman.

"A song ye must have, my jolly companions," assented the Chair.

Richard O'Meara's voice was round, mellow, and musical, and, assuming a thorough Bacchanalian air, he sang the fine old drinking-song of the "*Cruiskeen Lawn*," with its Irish chorus:—

"Gra ma chree, ma cruiskeen,
Slauntha gal ma vourneen,
Gra ma chree ma cruiskeen lawn:
Gra ma chree ma cruiskeen,
Slauntha gal ma vourneen,
Gra ma chree ma cruiskeen,
Lawn, lawn, lawn—
Gra ma chree ma cruiskeen lawn!"

—setting the jolly companions half crazy, as their voices mingled together.

"May that pipe of yours, Mr. Chair, never be without a drop to oil it," said Tom O'Loughlin. "Mr. Chair, if 'twouldn't be too much to ask, who knows but you'd give us your own song of the 'Cruiskeen Lawn.'

"To be sure I will, Tom, with a heart and a half."

Dick O'Meara's own Song of the "Cruiskeen Lawn."

"Who's he that says 'Alas!'
Whilst the pleasures of the glass
Upon his brooding sorrows dawn?
Oh, no! he is not worth
The best gift of his birth—
Thy smile, my little Cruiskeen lawn, lawn, lawn,
Thy smile, my little Cruiskeen lawn!
Chorus—Gra ma chree, etc.

"The t'other day, 'tis said,
As Phœbus rose from bed,
And stooped his thirst to satisfy at dawn;
Instead of honey'd dew,
His hurry led him to
A jorum of our Cruiskeen lawn, lawn, lawn,
A jorum of our Cruiskeen lawn!
Chorus—Gra ma chree, etc.

"He thought it was the vase
From which, in ancient days,
Their godships all their nectar had drawn;
And since, as I'm alive,
He swears he cannot thrive,
Without our Irish Cruiskeen lawn, lawn, lawn,
Without our Irish Cruiskeen lawn!

Chorus—Gra ma chree, etc.

"Huzza! for Irish whisky,
And all its joys so frisky!
Huzza! for all its frolic, roar, and fun!
Och hone! Och hone! I can't
Say half the things I meant
In praise of thee, my Cruiskeen lawn, lawn, lawn,
In praise of thee, my Cruiskeen lawn!

Chorus—Gra ma chree," etc.

As described to me by Toby Purcell, Mr. Chair's own song produced the most enthusiastic demonstrations of affection for "the Irish Cruiskeen lawn." During the progress of each verse the "jolly companions" smiled delightedly into each other's faces, swaying their bodies, and waving their glasses. And when the burthen of the

"Cruiskeen lawn, lawn, lawn,"

came on, each, as if by common consent, laid his

tumbler lovingly to his breast, and pressed it to his heart fondly, and took a hearty pull preparatory to the commencement of the second verse. And Mr. Chairman, carried away by the half-insane enjoyment over which he presided, was the most enthusiastic of all. He had in fact succeeded in banishing all remembrance of the home-reproach which had sent him forth with a darkened countenance, to the intemperance of the "lone room."

As the toasts and "says and sentiments" had, to use the language of the room, "gone the rounds," the song went "the rounds" also. Not one was treated to the glass of salt and water as a penalty for being unmusical.

Nick Mahaffy would stand up for it against any one who should gainsay him, that he could sing songs for "a week of Sundays," but that just now he couldn't call them to his mind. One only he could recollect, and *that* he used to sing when he was in his "Reading-made-easy," long ago.

"The best you could sing, Nick, my jovial fellow. Out with it!" ordered the Chair.

Nick Mahaffy's Song of Juvenility.

"There were two birds upon a stone,
Sing diddle-diddle-dee-dum!
One of those birds he flew away,
Sing diddle-diddle-dee-doo!
If the t'other isn't gone,
You may catch it to-day,
Sing diddle-diddle-dee-d-u-um!"

"Very good song, very well sung,
Jolly companions every one!"

"Health and song, Mr. Nick Mahaffy——!"

"I call on you, neighbour Paddy Dreelan," announced Mr. Nick Mahaffy. Paddy, obeying his patron's summons, sang a downright boozing ditty, scarcely to be expected from a person of his day-time cringing quietude of deportment. But Paddy had, as Toby Purcell had stated, seen somebody carrying his tumbler to his mouth.

The Refrain of Paddy Dreelan's Boozing Ditty.

"No crying, no sighing—
A woful face don't let me see;
I'll shut my shop,
And go take my drop,
And so live easy, gay, and free!"

Paul Carey, the land surveyor, who with Toby Purcell had calculated the quantity and cost of Ned Culkin's whisky consumptions, sang a well-known laudation of punch.

Refrain of Paul Carey's Song.

"Punch cures the gout, the colic, and the phthisic,
Punch cures the gout, the colic, and the phthisic,
Then be it known to all men,—
Be it known to all men,—
Be it known to all men,
'Tis the very best of physic!
Hurra! hurra! hurra!"

"Begone dull Care" was given by an unmarried tippler, who shouted forth:—

"My wife shall dance,
And I will sing,
So merrily pass the day—"

all unheedful of his state.

And "The Land of Potatoes O," was chanted. —The land—

"Where there's hospitality,
All reality,
No formality
There you'll ever see;

But, free and aisy,
We will so amaze ye,
You'll think us crazy!
Dull we'll never be!
Foll-de-roll-loll!
Foll-too-ra-loll-lee!" etc., etc.

The Chairman volunteered a favourite lyric, generally sung on such occasions as the present. He made free with the text, however. Whenever the milder beverage, wine, was eulogized in the original he substituted the more pungent incentive of the "lone room." Thus:—

"That time flees fast, the poet sings,
Oh! let me then advise—
In potteen punch to wet his wings,
And seize him as he flies," etc., etc.

A waggish fellow, when his "lilt" came round, changed the character of the night's melodies, for he crooned—

"There was a man, and he had a wife,
And when she died he killed her;
And after that it came to pass
That they had three fine childer.

These childer all they went to slide
Upon a summer's day;—
The ice it broke, and they all fell in,—
And the rest they ran away!"

The singer of this classical romance (answering somewhat to the French "*Il y avait une femme, qui s'appelait Thérèse; Elle avait huit enfants, qui est la moitié de seize,*" etc.) was proclaimed to be a "jolly companion" too.

As the night wore on, each fresh brewing of the "*liqueur de contradiction*" hurried the drinkers to the climax of excitement. It was no longer necessary that a draught of salt and water should be held up *in terrorem*. "Contributions of mirth," as the songs were named, were proffered, not only without solicitation, but they were forced on the company.—"*Croonauns*," "Planxties," and love-songs were given in the Irish language, to impart a twang of the soil. And Tom O'Loughlin volunteered a stave in low-Dutch, as he stated it to be, the unintelligible gibberish of which set the "jolly companions" screaming and shouting with ecstasy. Ultimately

there was a Babel of singing, and talking, and jesting, and laughter. The "*liqueur de contradiction*" had set all the inmates of the "lone room" crazy.

And poor tipsy Teague was as crazy as the rest. He would allow no one to remove him from his seat, and with his paws resting on the table he looked wildly from one insane face to the other, and yelped and barked stentoriously. The Chairman proclaimed himself as Pluto presiding over a revelry in Pandemonium; that Teague was Cerberus, and that he could see a cluster of heads sprouting from the brute's shoulders, and barking in chorus.

Approaching to the third hour past midnight, the noise of the "lone room" had abated to a comparative lull. Of the twelve who had "set to" at the commencement of the debauch, only five remained, the others had escaped, one by one, as occasion offered. The five incorrigible topers were, Richard O'Meara, the Half-pay, Ned Culkin, Tom O'Loughlin, and one other less noted person.

"Hallo! I say! the festive board is half empty!"

cried the Chair, looking around in blinking surprise. "Paltry cowards they are, and accursed may they be. May Gallaher's malediction lie upon them for leaving their liquor behind them. Up close to me here, my loyal few. Leal subjects ye are, who have remained faithful to your "king of the Gregory." My valiant comrades, notwithstanding the base desertion, our light shall not be—extinguished. No. 'Music hath charms to soothe the savage ear,' and we will be musical. I proclaim—that we—strike up—a concert. Ha, ha, ha!—a concert, by the life of man!—that Beethoven, or Mozart, or—or Mendelssohn,—or any other master—would be astonished at—to speak moderately! Yes, yes, upon my soul,—yes—astonished at—ha, ha! hallo! hulloo! Colonel, my worthy, a bassoon you are to be—a—ha, ha!—a prime instrument you will prove yourself. The devil a shriller, more squeaking clarionet was ever blown, than *you* will be, Ned Culkin! Viceroy Tom, I name you my trombone. I see another leal subject down there; you're a stout-built, full-bodied fellow, ha, ha! and your hide

is well-strained to keep you within it. My big drum *you* are to be. The leader of the orchestra so appoints his band. His musical majesty himself will be a fiddle—ha, ha, ha!—hurra!"

It was evident that the "concert" decreed by the Chair was no novel introduction to the "lone room." The Half-pay stood erect at the first summons. He inserted the ferule of his cudgel between his lips, and fingered it so as to prove his readiness to take part in the coming performance. Ned Culkin bounced up at once, steadied himself, fixed his hands as though he held a clarionet between them, and protruded his lips to receive the suppositious mouthpiece. Tom O'Loughlin pushed his left fist before him at arm's length, and held his right fist close to his right shoulder. The big drummer, he within the tightened hide, shut both his fists hard, and held them ready to pummel his own sides. And Mr. Chair snatched up the snuff-dish, placed it beneath his chin, and laid the snuffers across it as his fiddle-bow.

"Ready?" asked the Violin.

"Ready!—ready!—ready!—ready!" answered the Bassoon, the Clarionet, the Trombone, and the Big-drum.

"Then the Fiddle opens the concert. Here goes."

The *maître d'orchestre*, with exaggerated contortions and grimaces, rattled the snuffers across the snuff-dish, imitating with his voice, in the most ludicrous fashion, the instrument he represented. The Half-pay, with knitted brows and apparent intensity, worked at imaginary orifices in his cudgel, while a hoarse sound, somewhat near "*bhrum—bhrum—bhrum!*" was barked forth as bassoon. Ned Culkin swayed his body violently upwards and downwards as he fingered his imaginary clarionet, and his quavering scream was piercing as he so jerked his person. Tom O'Loughlin worked his ideal trombone to and fro with might and main, accompanying his motions with most discordant sounds: and the Big-drum battered his own fat sides most furiously, forcing out with every blow such hollow noise as a well-beaten big-drum should emit.

Fast and furious the ludicrous "concert" proceeded. The snuffers and snuff-dish rattled and scraped energetically, while the human Violin squeaked a galloping jig; the jaws of the Clarionet were distended, and the Clarionet's body bent and rose, and the Clarionet's fingers fingered the air, and the Clarionet screamed shrilly; and the Bassoon barked "bhrum!—bhrum!—bhrum! continuously; and the two arms of the Trombone worked backward and forward as if the Trombone were possessed, continuous groaning sounds coming from the Trombone's mouth: and the hide-bound Big-drum battered away fiercely, with a hoarse "bow-wow! bow-wow!" imitative of a big drum, following the blows.

Now and again the instruments paused to take breath, and the instruments laughed, loud wild laughter; and the instruments wiped their teeming foreheads between whiles; and the instruments drank deep draughts of liquor, and then went on again with renovated vigour.

Had these five last tipplers of the "lone room" become raging mad? Yes, veritable maniacs were

they. Mad children you would report them to be, so earnest and energetic in their tantrums, and yet so ludicrous their antics.

And on, on went the concert, varied by drinking and meaningless laughter. At length, the Big-drum fell heavily to the floor; Fiddle, Clarionet, and Trombone shouted lustily; and the "bhrum!—bhrum!" of the Bassoon was barked out riotously. After a time, the Clarionet sank down, exhausted and disabled; next, the Trombone staggered and fell. Now Fiddle and Bassoon alone stood erect. Between the two a fierce rivalry went on for a while, and then the Bassoon tumbled helplessly. Of all the five instruments the Fiddle alone remained upright. So the Fiddle shouted "Huzza! huzza! huzza! The king of the Gregory was the conqueror!"

As the instruments fell successively, the dog Teague, who had also been an excited participator in the concert, barking all the while, worried each with apparent relish for the pastime. When all four had sunk down, he went from one to the other

rolling them over and shaking them, as if sharing in his master's victory, and intent on despoiling the slain.

Then Richard O'Meara sat down, breathing laboriously, and shouting and laughing. He seized a glass in his right hand and another in his left.

"Your health, O'Meara, my boy!" he said, in a congratulatory tone, and he drank from his right-hand glass.

"Thank you, Dick, my staunch old fellow!" and he drank from his left-hand glass.

"Your health again, O'Meara," and he drank again from his right-hand glass.

"Thank you, Dick, my hearty!" and he drank again from his left-hand glass.

And so he went on, right against left, left against right, to satisfy himself as to his superiority as a drinker, and in laudation of himself as hero of the night.

Notwithstanding a strong repugnance towards my subject, I have described in detail this night of

nights in the "lone room," that the reader of this, my narrative, may be able to draw a comparison between the home of Richard O'Meara, and the misnamed "indulgence" for which he had abandoned it.

END OF VOL. I.

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